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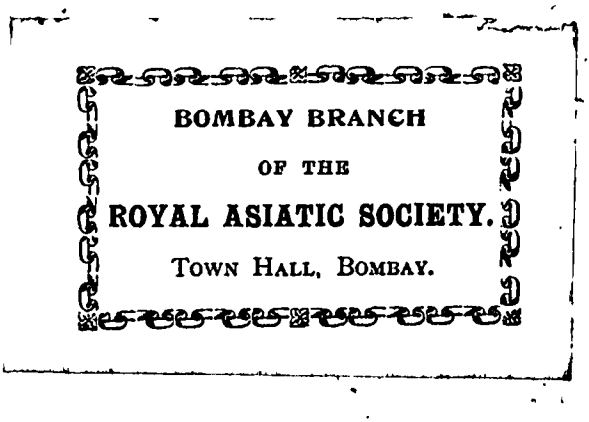

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THE

POLITICAL WRITINGS

OF

28298

RICHARD COBDEN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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Preface. To the American reader.

W

ERRATA.

Page 14, line 26, *for* "the most" *read* "a most."
Page 54, note †, *for* "ibid." *read* "p. 51."
Page 55, note *, *for* "51" *read* "39."
Page 65, note †, *for* "49" *read* "55."
Page 68, note *, *for* "37" *read* "43."
Page 71, line 11, *for* "have" *read* "having."
Page 74, note *, *for* "49, 50" *read* "55, 56."
Page 295, line 3, *for* "protentous" *read* "portentous."
Page 388, line 3, *for* "are" *read* "is."

A LETTER.

London, 10th April, 1862.

My dear Sir,

I avail myself of your kind permission to address you a letter on the present unsatisfactory state of International Maritime Law, as affecting the rights of belligerents and neutrals.

It is not necessary that I should dwell on the particular branch of the subject to which the debate on Mr. Horsfall's motion was, as I venture to think, too exclusively confined, namely, whether private property at sea should be exempted from capture by armed government ships in time of war.

A statement of the simple facts of the case, as they affect British interests, ought to be a sufficient answer to this question, without the necessity of one syllable of discussion. Here is a country, the average value of whose ships and cargoes, afloat, exceeds £100,000,000, which is more than double the amount possessed by any other state. A proposal is made by the United States, with the concurrence of France, Russia, and other countries, to exempt this property from legalised plunder in the event of war. Our

merchants and shipowners are, naturally, eager to accept so advantageous an offer, which is, however, rejected by the British Government.

One of the arguments urged by a member of the Cabinet to justify this rejection need not alarm us. It is alleged that such a stipulation would not be respected in time of war. At the worst, this would only leave us where we now are. If, however, an engagement were entered into, by a formal convention of the maritime powers, for insuring the inviolability of private property at sea, it would become a recognised part of international law; and I do not believe that a judge, sitting in any prize court in the civilised world, would afterwards condemn, as legal capture, ships or cargoes seized in violation of that law. Sure I am, at least, that it is the duty of those filling high office in this country to brand with dishonour the violators of such a solemn engagement, and not to seem, in anticipation, to justify, or even palliate, their infamy.

I have had some difficulty in believing in the sincerity of those who, in order to reconcile us to this unequal game of pillage, put forth the argument that it is desirable to subject our shipowners to the penalty of ruin, in the event of war, as the best means of binding the nation over to keep the peace. If a majority of the Cabinet, and of both Houses of Parliament, were composed of shipowners, there might be some consistency in this proposition. But if power and responsibility are to be united in the same hands, there is another body of proprietors whose fortunes might with greater justice be made liable to

confiscation in case of war. The argument is, however, unworthy of serious refutation.

Had not some of the opponents of Mr. Horsfall's motion professed to doubt whether the Paris declaration in favour of neutrals was irrevocable, they would obviously have been unable to oppose it. But the Paris Congress of 1856 merely recognised a state of things which, as Mr. Baring remarked, had arisen out of the progress of events; it no more created those events than the adoption of the Gregorian Calendar in 1752 produced the astronomical laws which rendered that reform in our style necessary; and any attempt of our statesmen, now, to revert to the treatment of neutrals sanctioned by our prize courts in 1810, would place them on a level with those politicians whom Hogarth depicts, in his famous election scene, clamouring to their candidates, "Give us back our eleven days!"

My principal object, however, in writing, is to show that the issue raised by Mr. Horsfall's motion, when taken alone, is now of little practical value. The question has assumed larger proportions, owing to the progress of events, and in consequence of the later proceedings of the United States Government. The facts of the case, which are not sufficiently known to the public, are as follows:—

In 1856, as you are aware, Mr. Marcy, foreign secretary to President Pierce, when replying to the communication from the Paris Congress, inviting the American Government to adhere to the declaration abolishing privateering, made the memorable counter-proposal to Europe to exempt the private property

of belligerents at sea from capture, both by privateers and armed government ships. This offer, as I have stated, was favourably received by France, Russia, and other maritime powers, but met with no encouragement from the British Government.

The election for the Presidency took place in the autumn of 1856, when Mr. Buchanan was chosen the successor to Mr. Pierce. The question of international maritime law now underwent further discussion in America, and it was contended that, in addition to the exemption of private property from capture, when at sea, it should be free from molestation whilst entering or leaving a commercial port; that, in fine, blockades should be restricted to naval arsenals, and towns which were at the same time invested by an army on land. One of the New York journals,* the organ of the mercantile body, offered the following as a substitute for the fourth article of the declaration of the Paris Congress:—

"Blockades are henceforth abolished, in regard to all vessels and cargoes engaged in lawful commerce; but they may be enforced as heretofore against vessels having contraband goods on board, and against all Government vessels, whether armed or unarmed."

At a subsequent stage of these discussions, President Buchanan addressed a letter to the Chairman of the New York Chamber of Commerce, in which he said: "We must obtain the consent of the powerful naval nations that merchant vessels shall not be blockaded in port, but be suffered to pass the blockading squadron, and go out to sea." The consequence of this

* The *Journal of Commerce*.

state of opinion was that Mr. Dallas, the United States minister at London, was in 1857 instructed by his Government to suspend the negotiations which he was still attempting to promote, upon the basis of Mr. Marcy's proposition.

Thus the matter remained till the spring of 1859, when, on the breaking out of the war in Italy, a circular dispatch was transmitted from Mr. Cass, President Buchanan's foreign secretary, to the representatives of the United States at the European capitals, suggesting still further reforms in international maritime law. An unsuccessful effort was made by Mr. Lindsay to induce our Government to lay on the table of the House a copy of this document; but the substance of its most important proposal was explained by Lord John Russell, when communicating to the House (February 18, 1861) the particulars of the interview at which Mr. Dallas had read to him, as foreign minister, this dispatch:—Mr. Cass was represented by His Lordship to have declared that he "considered that the right of blockade, as authorised by the law of nations, was liable to very great abuse; that the only case in which a blockade ought to be permitted was when a land army was besieging a fortified place, and a fleet was employed to blockade it on the other side; but that any attempt to intercept trade by blockade, or to blockade places which were commercial ports, was an abuse of the right that ought not to be permitted." Lord Russell took this opportunity of explaining to the House his reasons for opposing these views of the American Government, and which were in substance the same

as those with which Mr. Marcy's proposal had been met,—namely, that the system of commercial blockades is essential to the maintenance of our naval supremacy.

These incidents have a most important significance, if viewed in connection with present events. We live in an age of revolutionary transitions, which warn us against too obstinate an adherence to ancient precedent or blind routine. If the proposal of the United States to abolish commercial blockades had been favourably received by the British Government, there can be no doubt, from the known tendency of other maritime powers, that it might have become a part of the law of nations, in which case the commerce between England and the Southern States of the American Union would have been uninterrupted by the present war,—for the blockade is acknowledged by Europe only as a belligerent right, and not as an exercise of municipal authority. In justice to the American Government, and to prevent any misapprehension of the following statement, I am bound to express the opinion that the closing of the cotton ports is virtually our own act. We have imposed upon ourselves, as neutrals, the privations and sufferings incidental to a commercial blockade, because we assume that we are interested in reserving to ourselves the belligerent right which we now concede to others.

Let us consider, for a moment, whether this policy will bear the test of reason, fact, and experience.

One-third of the inhabitants of these islands, a number equal to the whole population of Great Britain

at the commencement of this century, subsist on imported food. No other country contains half as many people as the United Kingdom dependent for subsistence on the produce of foreign lands. The grain of all kinds imported into England in 1861 exceeded in value the whole amount of our imports sixty years ago: and the greater portion of this supply is brought from the two great maritime states, Russia and America, to whom, if to any countries, the belligerent right of blockade must have for us a valuable application. If left to the free operation of nature's laws, this world-wide dependence offers not only the best safeguard against scarcity, but the surest guarantee for regularity of supply; but a people so circumstanced is, beyond all others, interested in removing every human regulation which interferes with the free circulation of the necessaries of life, whether in time of peace or war,—for a state of war increases the necessity for insuring the means of feeding and employing the people.

This is, however, a very inadequate view of the subject. For the raw materials of our industry, which are in other words the daily bread of a large portion of our population, we are still more dependent on foreign countries. Of the 3,127,000 bales of cotton exported in the year 1860-61 from the United States, Great Britain received 2,175,000 or 69 per cent. Of the total exports, from Russia, of flax, hemp, and codilla, amounting, in 1859, to 282,880,000 lbs., we received 205,344,000 lbs., or 80 per cent. Of the 101,412,000 lbs. of tallow exported from that country, 91,728,000 lbs., or 90 per cent, reached our shores.

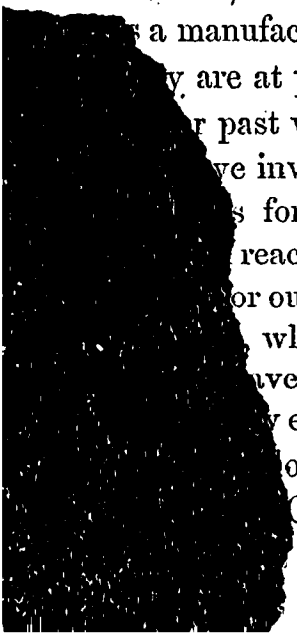
And of her total exports of 1,026,000 quarters of linseed, we received 679,000, or 67 per cent. If we refer to other maritime states, we find similar results. Of the 134,500,000 lbs. of tea exported last year from China, 90,500,000, or 70 per cent, came to British ports. And of the 2,752,000 lbs. of silk exported from that country we received upwards of 90 per cent. Of the total exports from Brazil, in 1860, of 185,000 bales of cotton, Great Britain received 102,000, or 55 per cent. Of the total exports from Egypt, in 1860-1, of 142,000 bales of cotton, we received 97,000, or 70 per cent.

It may be alleged of nearly all articles of food or raw materials, transported over sea, that more than one-half is destined for these islands. It follows that were we, in the exercise of the belligerent right of blockade, to prevent the exportation of those commodities, we should inflict greater injury on ourselves than on all the rest of the world, not excepting the country with which we were at war: for if we could effectually close the ports of one or more of these countries against both exports and imports, we should be merely intercepting the supply of comparative luxuries to them, while we arrested the flow of the necessaries of life to ourselves; and for every cultivator of the soil, engaged in the production of cotton or other raw materials, thereby doomed to idleness, three or four persons would be deprived of employment in the distribution and manufacture of those commodities.

These facts are an answer to those who maintain that it is necessary to reserve in our hands the right

of blockade, as an instrument of coercion in case of war. Against such countries as France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, &c., blockades have lost their force, owing to the extension of the railway system throughout the continent of Europe. In cases where a blow may still be struck at the commerce of a nation,—of what use, I would ask, is a weapon of offence which recoils with double force on ourselves? It would be but a poor consolation to our population, who were subjected to the evils of enforced idleness and starvation, to be told that the food and raw materials destined for their subsistence and employment were rotting in the granaries of ruined cultivators in Russia or America.

These considerations have always led us, practically, to violate our own theory of a commercial blockade, whenever the power to do so has remained in our hands, even when the exigencies of our situa-



a manufacturing people were far less pressing
y are at present. If we consult the experi-
r past wars, we shall find that, as a bellige-
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s for preventing the productions of our
reaching our shores. It is true we have
or our navy, the traditional right and duty
whilst (I beg your attention to the dis-
ve invariably connived at its evasion.
examples. We all know how syste-
ockade of France, and other parts of
Continent, was relaxed by licences
war with the first Napoleon; and it
at the commencement of the present

century, during the height of that war, the deficiency of our own harvests was repeatedly supplied from the cornfields of our most deadly enemy. Nor must we forget that the celebrated Orders in Council, the most gigantic of all blockades, were ultimately revoked in the interest of our own manufacturers and merchants. Again, in the war with the United States, in 1813, during the blockade of that coast, a powerful and interested party in Parliament called for measures to prevent the importation of American cotton into England, but they were opposed by petitions from Manchester, Stockport, Glasgow, and other places connected with the cotton manufacture, and the result was that the Government refused to take any steps to intercept the cotton of the United States at our Custom-house; and this occurred at a time when our dependence on the produce of that region was, perhaps, not equal to a twentieth part of that of the present day.

The Crimean war, however, affords us a mo
example. That war was declared in Mar
but the ports of southern Russia were not
in a state of blockade until March, 1855.
temporised for a year with their right
close the commercial ports of the Black
carrying on the most sanguinary strug
naval arsenal of Sebastopol, in order to
portation of food from Russia, to ma
ficient harvests of France and Englar
half a million of quarters of grain re
from that region in 1854. Here at le
for the policy of restricting block

places, and leaving commercial ports unmolested. If we turn to the operations in the Baltic, during the same war, we find that our blockade of Cronstadt had merely the effect of diverting the produce of Russia, destined for England, into more costly overland channels. An attempt was made similar to that of interested parties in 1813, referred to above, to induce our Government to prevent the importation of Russian produce into this country through Prussia, which drew from the Dundee Chamber of Commerce a memorial, declaring that the raw material from Russia was indispensable to the very existence of the industry of that district. After due deliberation, our Government refused to require a certificate of origin at the custom-house, or to offer any other impediment to the importation of Russian hemp, flax, tallow, &c., into this country, through the territory of neutrals. The consequence was that Prussia, which sent us tallow to the value of £150 only in 1853, was enabled in 1855 to supply us with that article to the amount of £1,837,300; and other Russian commodities reached this country in a similar manner.

It is only necessary to point to the examples of China, Mexico, &c., to show that in our hostilities with the weaker maritime powers, we carefully eschew the policy of resorting, as a means of coercion, to the blockade of their commercial ports.

A fair deduction from these facts and premises leads us to a very grave national dilemma. We persist in upholding a belligerent right, which we have always shrunk from enforcing, and shall never rigorously apply, by which we place in the hands

of other belligerents the power, at any moment, of depriving a large part of our population of the supply of the raw materials of their industry, and of the necessaries of life. In this respect the question of blockade is essentially different from that of the capture of private property at sea. In the latter case we are only liable to injury when we choose to become belligerents, whereas, in the former, we are exposed to serious calamities as neutrals; and England, by proclaiming the policy of non-intervention, has recently constituted herself the great neutral power. In this capacity we are now enduring the effects of a blockade, by which it is estimated that the earnings of labour in this country are curtailed to the extent of a quarter of a million sterling a week. Should it continue, it will, I fear, bring many of the evils of war home to our doors, and plunge the ingenious and industrious population connected with our cotton manufacture, whose recent improvement and elevation we have witnessed with pride, into the depths of pauperism and misery. Nor have we any assurance that this will prove a solitary case. I can imagine a combination of events, not more improbable than the blockade of the cotton region of the United States by sea and land would have appeared to be three years ago, by which we may be cut off from all commercial intercourse with other countries on which we are largely dependent for raw materials and food.

Speaking abstractedly, and not in reference to the present blockade,—for we are precluded from pleading our sufferings as a ground of grievance against a people whose proposals for the mitigation of the

barbarous maritime code we have rejected,—I do not hesitate to denounce, as opposed to the principles of natural justice, a system of warfare which inflicts greater injuries on an unoffending neutral community than on a belligerent. And, however sincere the governments of the great maritime powers may be, during a period of general peace, in their professions of adhesion to this system, should any of them as neutrals be subjected to severe sufferings from the maintenance of a blockade, the irritation and sense of injustice which it will occasion to great masses of population, coupled with the consciousness that it is an evil remediable by an appeal to force, will always present a most dangerous incentive to war. Certain I am that such a system is incompatible with the new commercial policy to which we have unreservedly committed ourselves. Free trade, in the widest definition of the term, means only the division of labour, by which the productive powers of the whole earth are brought into mutual co-operation. If this scheme of universal dependence is to be liable to sudden dislocation, whenever two governments choose to go to war, it converts a manufacturing industry, such as ours, into a lottery, in which the lives and fortunes of multitudes of men are at stake. I do not comprehend how any British statesman who consults the interests of his country, and understands the revolution which free trade is effecting in the relations of the world, can advocate the maintenance of commercial blockades. If I shared their view, I should shrink from promoting the indefinite growth of a population whose means of subsistence would be liable to be cut

off at any moment by a belligerent power, against whom we should have no right of resistance, or even of complaint.

It must be in mere irony that the advocates of such a policy as this ask—of what use would our navy be in case of war if commercial blockades were abolished? Surely, for a nation that has no access to the rest of the world but by sea, and a large part of whose population is dependent for food on foreign countries, the chief use of a navy should be to keep open its communications, not to close them!

There is another branch of this subject to which a recent occurrence has imparted peculiar importance. We require a clear definition of the circumstances which confer on a belligerent the right of visitation or search. The old and universally admitted rule that any maritime power, when at war, was entitled everywhere to stop and visit the merchant vessels of neutrals, is allowed to be unsuited to this age of extended commerce, of steamers, and postal packets. The principal object which belligerents had in view in the exercise of this power was the capture of enemy's property. But, since the Paris Declaration exempts the goods of an enemy from seizure in neutral bottoms, there is little motive left for preserving this belligerent right; and the question would receive a very simple solution by assimilating the practice in time of war to that which now prevails in time of peace.

Merchant vessels on the high seas are, during peace, considered and treated as a part of the territory to which they belong. There is no point on

which the maritime powers are more clearly understood than that, excepting cases of special convention to the contrary, such as that for suppressing the African slave trade, the flags of merchantmen afford an absolute protection against visitation or obstruction by an alien ship of war. This rule applies, of course, only to the high seas; for when foreign merchant vessels approach so near the coast of a maritime state as to place themselves within its municipal jurisdiction, they are subject to all its police and revenue regulations. Now, why should not this be the invariable law of the sea, in time of war as well as of peace? Because two maritime powers in some quarter of the globe choose to enter upon hostilities is no good reason why neutral merchant ships, sailing in every sea, should be subjected to their authority.

This change would simplify the question of contraband of war, and thus tend to obviate the risk of international disputes. An article is rendered contraband of war only by its hostile destination. Were the right of search on the high seas in time of war abolished, the only admissible proof of this destination would be the fact of the vessel being found within the waters of a belligerent state. If those waters were in the possession of a hostile power, the jurisdiction would appertain to the blockading fleet of that power; and a neutral merchant vessel, containing articles contraband of war, entering voluntarily within that jurisdiction, would be *ipso facto* liable to capture. As to the question what should, under such circumstances, constitute an un-

lawful cargo, I see no reason why we should seek to multiply impediments to commerce, by extending the category of articles contraband of war beyond that proposed by the United States, viz. arms and ammunition.

Without dwelling on minor details, the three great reforms in international maritime law embraced in the preceding argument are—

1. The exemption of private property from capture at sea, during war, by armed vessels of every kind.

2. Blockades to be restricted to naval arsenals, and to towns besieged at the same time on land, with the exception of articles contraband of war.

3. The merchant ships of neutrals on the high seas to be inviolable to the visitation of alien government vessels in time of war as in time of peace.

It is at the option of the English government at any time to enter upon negotiations with the other great Powers for the revision of the maritime code, and I speak advisedly in expressing my belief that it depends on us alone whether the above reforms are to be carried into effect. I will only add that I regard these changes as the necessary corollary of the repeal of the navigation laws, the abolition of the corn laws, and the abandonment of our colonial monopoly. We have thrown away the sceptre of force, to confide in the principle of freedom—uncovenanted, unconditional freedom. Under this new *régime* our na-

tional fortunes have prospered beyond all precedent. During the last fourteen years the increase in our commerce has exceeded its entire growth during the previous thousand years of reliance on force, cunning, and monopoly. This should encourage us to go forward, in the full faith that every fresh impediment removed from the path of commerce, whether by sea or land, and whether in peace or war, will augment our prosperity, at the same time that it will promote the general interests of humanity.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

RICH^{D}. COBDEN.

Henry Ashworth, Esq., President of the
Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

POSTSCRIPT.—On the first appearance of this letter in the columns of the newspaper press, the not unusual mode of raising irrelevant issues, with the view of evading the real question, was resorted to. It has been alleged that I had no authority for saying that the English Government had refused to accede to Mr. Marcy's proposal for exempting private property from capture at sea.

The very fact that Mr. Horsfall's motion, which was regarded as a repetition of Mr. Marcy's proposal, was opposed in the House of Commons by Lord Palmerston, who had been Prime Minister in 1856, when that proposal was first made, might be considered sufficient proof that it was not favourably received by the British Government. But other

evidence is not wanting. Lord John Russell, speaking in the House of Commons, February 18th, 1861, said, "I found that when the matter was under discussion with the American Government at the time of the Conference at Paris, the opinion of the Earl of Clarendon (then Foreign Minister) seems to have been unfavourable to the proposal that private property at sea should be respected during war."

It has been, moreover, asserted that the American Government were not sincere in making their proposal. Such an accusation coarsely (because anonymously) made, and without an atom of evidence to support it, might properly be passed over without notice. I refer to it only because it gives me the opportunity of saying that I have had the opportunity of conversing with leading statesmen in the United States, not merely of the political school to which Mr. Marcy belonged, but also of the Republican party, and they all agree that had the proposition for making private property inviolable at sea been accepted by the European powers in 1856, it would have been willingly carried into effect by their Government. The Senate was known to be favourable, and no other body shares the treaty-making power with the President. It was, indeed, impossible that President Pierce and Mr. Marcy could have made such a proposal to Europe without having previously ascertained that it had the sanction of two-thirds of the members of the Senate, whose concurrence is, by the constitution, requisite to carry any treaty into effect.

R. C.

May 15th, 1862.

HOW WARS ARE GOT UP IN INDIA.

THE ORIGIN

OF

THE BURMESE WAR.

NOTE.

THE following pamphlet was written in the summer of 1853, nearly three years before the late Lord Dalhousie, then Governor-General of India, had terminated that career of violence and spoliation which dazzled the nation by the meretricious lustre of its successes, but which to the prescient eye of Mr. Cobden, who saw with painful clearness its injustice and immorality, was fraught with the gravest peril to the Empire. His attention was first drawn to the origin of the last Burmese war by a pamphlet from the able pen of the Rev. Henry Richard—a gentleman who, as is well known, was intimately associated with him in some of the most important of his public labours. The apathy which was then felt in the details of our Indian policy, and therefore the great public service which Mr. Cobden rendered by assisting to uplift the veil, may, to some extent, be illustrated by an incident which, although trivial in itself, is eminently suggestive. Conversing with a magnate of the East India Company in the lobby of the House of Commons, he remarked on the profound ignorance and unconcern of the public in relation to all Indian questions. "I have not met," said he, "with any one who has paid the smallest attention to the origin of this Burmese war, except my friend here," — pointing to Mr. Richard — "who indeed dug the matter to light from the blue book."

Mr. Cobden lost no time in disentombing the facts from the same official burial ground, and with a result which will entitle his searching exposure of deeds that will not bear the light to the thoughtful consideration of all Englishmen who desire to make themselves acquainted with the true history of Indian misgovernment. The last eloquent paragraph of the pamphlet, in which the certainty of retribution for national transgressions of the moral law is solemnly enforced, may now be read in the light of the ghastly events which have since made Cawnpore and Delhi but too famous throughout the world.

PREFACE.

HAVING had occasion to read with attention the "Papers relating to Hostilities with Burmah," with the view of bringing the subject under the consideration of the House, (which circumstances prevented my doing) I have made an abstract of the leading facts of the case for publication, in the hope that it may induce the reader to peruse the original correspondence. This I was the more immediately tempted to do, from not having been able to meet with anybody, in or out of Parliament, who had read the "Papers." In fact, owing to the complex form in which they are printed—not giving letter and answer in consecutive order, but grouping them arbitrarily in batches—they require a considerable effort of the attention to read them with advantage. I may say, by way of explanation, that the whole of the narrative is founded, exclusively, upon the Parliamentary papers, and that all the extracts in the text, for which references are given at the foot of each page, are copied from the same official source.—Wherever I have inserted quotations not taken from the Parliamentary papers they are printed as notes. It should be borne in mind that the case, such as it is, is founded upon our own *ex parte* statement. A great many of the letters are mutilated; and, remembering that, in the Afghan

papers, it is now known that the character of at least one of the Cabool chiefs was sacrificed by a most dishonest garbling of his language, I confess I am not without suspicions that a similar course may have been pursued in the present instance. I will only add, then, bad as our case now appears, what would it be if we could have access to the Burmese "Blue Books," stating their version of the business?

The correspondence to which I have referred is—

1st. Papers relating to hostilities with Burmah, presented to both Houses of Parliament, June 4th, 1852.

2nd. Further Papers relating to hostilities with Burmah, presented to both Houses of Parliament, March 15th, 1853.

HOW WARS ARE GOT UP IN INDIA.

In June, 1851, the British barque *Monarch*, of 250 tons, last from Moulmein, reached Rangoon, the principal port of the Burmese Empire. On the second day after her arrival, Captain Sheppard, the master and owner, "was taken before the police to answer the charge of having, during the voyage, thrown overboard the pilot Esoph, preferred by a man named Hajim, a native of Chittagong, who stated that he was brother of the said pilot."* The accuser and the deceased were British subjects, both being natives of Chittagong, one of the provinces of our Indian empire, lying contiguous to the territory of Burmah. The answer to the accusation was, that the pilot, having run the vessel aground, had jumped overboard. Captain Sheppard was mulcted in fines and fees to the amount of £46, and permission was then given him to depart; but when about to sail he was again detained, "owing to a charge brought by a man named Dewan Ali, (a British subject, employed in one of the Moulmein gun-boats), calling himself a brother of the pilot, bringing forward a claim for a sum of 500 rupees, which he stated his brother had taken with him."† This led to a fresh exaction of £55;—and,

* Papers relating to hostilities with Burmah presented to Parliament June 4, 1852, p. 5.

† Ibid.

after a forcible detention altogether of eight days, the ship was allowed to sail.

The British vessel, the *Champion*, of 410 tons, Captain Lewis, arrived at Rangoon, from the Mauritius, in August, 1851. Two Bengal coolies, who had secreted themselves on board his ship, with a view to return to their country, made charges against the captain of murder and other offences, and they were joined by some lascars and others of the crew, who deserted, and made an appeal to the authorities for the recovery of their wages. After being detained fifteen days, and compelled to forfeit £70 for fines, fees, and seamen's wages, Captain Lewis was suffered to depart.

These two captains appealed to the Government of India for redress. They claimed together £1920 for reimbursement of arbitrary fines, demurrage of ships, and compensation for ill-usage, and unlawful imprisonment. This claim was revised by the Indian authorities, and cut down to £920, or less than one-half; and it was in enforcing payment of this sum that the present war arose.

It must be borne in mind that all the parties to these suits were British subjects; the governor of Rangoon had not been adjudicating in matters in which Burmese interests, as opposed to those of foreigners, were at stake.

When these complaints were laid before the Governor-General of India, it happened that two of the Queen's ships, the *Fox* and the *Serpent*, under the command of Commodore Lambert, were lying in the Hooghly. He was requested to proceed to Rangoon, and "in maintenance of the Treaty of Yandaboo, and

the Commercial Treaty of 1826, to demand full reparation for the injuries and oppressions to which the above-named British subjects have been exposed." No other demand for reparation beyond the payment of this sum of about £920 appears at the outset of these proceedings. Vague allusions are made to other acts of injustice committed upon British subjects, but no specific complaint is formally made, and no individual grievances are officially adduced, excepting those of Captains Sheppard and Lewis. We are informed, indeed, in a Minute, by the Governor-General of India, that "for many years past, complaints, from time to time, had been made of acts of oppression and of violation of treaty by the Burmese Governors. *None, however, had been brought forward of sufficient extent or significancy, to call for the formal notice of this government.*"* It is important at the outset, to have the highest authority for the fact, that up to this time the Burmese authorities at Aya were quite ignorant that the British government had any complaint to prefer against the Governors of Rangoon.

Before his departure from Calcutta, Commodore Lambert received very precise instructions from the Governor-General, how to act under almost every possible contingency; and as these directions were disregarded the moment he reached Rangoon, without drawing on himself a word of censure or remonstrance, thus involving grave questions as to the due assertion of authority on one side, and the observance of professional subordination on the other, I beg the reader's careful attention to this part of the narrative.

* P. 64.

It will, moreover, serve to illustrate the unsatisfactory working of the "double government" of India.

After recapitulating all the facts of the cases of Captains Sheppard and Lewis, and requesting Commodore Lambert to proceed to demand reparation from the Governor of Rangoon, Lord Dalhousie suggests, that "although there seems no reason to doubt the accuracy of the depositions, or the veracity of the deponents,* it would be right that the Commodore should in the first instance be satisfied on this head."† He is then requested to demand from the Governor of Rangoon the just pecuniary compensation in favour of the injured parties. *Should that functionary refuse redress* (mark the proviso), the Commodore is then to forward to the King of Burmah, at Ava, the capital, a letter with which he is furnished, from the Government of India, calling his Majesty's attention to the subject, "in the full conviction that he will at once condemn the conduct of his officers by whom this offence has been perpetrated, and will make to the parties who have been injured that compensation which is most justly due to them for the injuries they have sustained."‡ So minute are the instructions given to the Commodore by Lord Dalhousie, that the mode of forwarding the letter to Ava, and the proper way of disposing of his squadron during the necessary delay in receiving an answer, are carefully pointed out in these terms:—

"In the event of the Governor of Rangoon refusing, or evading compliance with the demands conveyed

* Why, then, reduce the claim to less than one-half?

† P. 13. ‡ Ibid.

to him by the Commodore, the letter addressed by the President in Council to the King should be delivered by the Commodore to the Governor of Rangoon for transmission to Ava, accompanied by an intimation that an early reply from the Court of Ava will be expected; and that, if it should not in due time be received, the Government of India will proceed to take such measures as they may think necessary and right.

"The delay thus interposed is unavoidable in the present anomalous relations of the two governments. *It will, moreover, admit of the Commodore proceeding to the Persian Gulf, whither his Lordship understands he is under orders to proceed.*"*

The Governor-General's instructions conclude with the following emphatic injunction, to avoid any violent proceedings; it might have been penned expressly to guard against the course which the Commodore afterwards pursued:—"IT IS TO BE DISTINCTLY UNDERSTOOD THAT NO ACT OF HOSTILITY IS TO BE COMMITTED AT PRESENT, THOUGH THE REPLY OF THE GOVERNOR SHOULD BE UNFAVOURABLE, NOR UNTIL DEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING SUCH HOSTILITIES SHALL BE GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA."†

Let us now recapitulate in the briefest possible terms, the instructions given to Commodore Lambert:—

1st. He was requested to inquire on the spot, whether the compensation claimed by Captains Sheppard and Lewis, which had already been reduced to less than one-half of their original demand by the

* P. 14. † Ibid.

Indian Government, was founded in justice:—in a word he was instructed to hear both sides.

2nd. To demand payment of the amount of compensation from the Governor of Rangoon, before applying to the Court of Ava; and to use the letter addressed to the King only, "in the event of the Governor refusing or evading compliance."*

3rd. In case it was found necessary to forward the letter to the King, then the Commodore was to proceed to the Persian Gulf.

4th. In no case, until further definite instructions should be received from the Government of India, was any act of hostility to be committed.

We shall see under what circumstances Commodore Lambert set aside all these instructions, and pursued the very opposite course to that prescribed by the Governor-General.

Towards the end of November, 1851, the Commodore sailed with his squadron from Calcutta for the Rangoon River. The distance by sea, between the ports of Calcutta and Rangoon, is about 500 miles. On his arrival at the latter place, several of the residents,† who claimed to be British subjects, preferred

* P. 14.

† The first person who came on board the Commodore's ship, (whose name is given in the Blue Book, and in the Parliamentary Report, but which for obvious reasons I suppress), is thus described by Lord Ellenborough:—"One of the most considerable traders at Rangoon is a person of the name of ——. That man, as soon as he knew of the probability of a war, freighted a schooner with arms, and sold them to the Governor of Rangoon. When the Governor refused payment for them, he had the effrontery to go to Commodore Lambert, and complain of the injury

further complaints against the Governor of Rangoon. He requested them to state their grievances in writing, which they did on the 28th November;* but on the 27th, *before a written declaration was in his hands*, (it is important to notice this, as the beginning of a series of impulsive and precipitate acts), he wrote to the Governor of Rangoon to the following effect.†

"COMMODORE LAMBERT TO THE GOVERNOR OF RANGOON.

"*On board Her Britannic Majesty's ship of war Fox, at anchor off Rangoon, November 27th*, 1851.

"The object of my visit to Rangoon was, at the request of the Most Noble the Marquis of Dalhousie, the Governor-General of British India, to demand redress for insults and injuries you have committed on subjects belonging to Her Britannic Majesty Queen Victoria.

"Since my arrival, so many more complaints have been made by persons residing at Rangoon, who have a right to claim British protection, that I have deemed it my duty to withhold my original demand, until I have again made known their complaints to his Lordship."

It might naturally be expected that, after dispatching this letter to the Governor, the writer would send one of the two steamers which, in addition to his own vessel, the *Fox*, now composed the squadron under his command, to Calcutta, for further orders. This

inflicted upon him. I suppose we shall hereafter see the amount of compensation claimed by that person in the bill to be paid by the Burmese government. The Governor of Rangoon offered in consequence £100 for this man's head; and I confess I should not have been deeply grieved if he had got it. This is a description of one of the persons for whom this great war is to be undertaken."—*House of Lords, April 5th*, 1852.

* P. 25. † P. 24.

was much too dilatory a mode of proceeding. On the very next day the Commodore commenced his diplomatic career, without credentials or authority of any kind, by sitting down and writing a letter to the "Prime Minister" of the King of Ava, enclosing the letter which had been entrusted to him for use, *in case the Governor had refused compliance with his demand*, and adding, that owing to the accounts he had heard of the additional wrongs inflicted upon British subjects by the Governor, he passed him by, and appealed for his punishment directly to the Court of Ava.*

These two letters, the one from *The President of the Council of India in Council, to the King of Ava*, and the other from *Commodore Lambert to the Prime Minister of His Majesty the King of Ava*, were then forwarded to the Governor of Rangoon, with the following:—†

"COMMODORE LAMBERT TO THE GOVERNOR OF RANGOON.

"*November 28th*, 1851.

"I have the honour to transmit you a letter for His Majesty the King of Ava, together with one for the Prime Minister of the King.

"I shall expect that every dispatch will be used for forwarding the same, and I hold you responsible for an answer being delivered in these waters within five weeks from this day."

Captains Latter and Tarleton were deputed to deliver this letter to the Governor. The following is the description of the interview as given by Capt. Latter, who filled the office of interpreter to the Expedition.

* P. 24. † Ibid.

"This letter was translated by me into Burmese. We landed, went to the Governor's house, escorted by some of the English residents and traders. I read aloud to the Governor, first in English, and then in Burmese, the letter, and Captain Tarleton delivered it. The Governor made his appearance in a somewhat informal dress, being dressed in nothing but common white clothes, and smoking a cheroot; whilst all the under Governors were in their court dresses. This was the more to be remarked, because the Governor has several gold crowns, which he wears on State occasions. The European officers were of course in full uniform. The Governor wished us to stop and sit down, but Captain Tarleton thought it more prudent to say that we had only been charged to read and deliver the letter to him, and that we had received no instructions about holding any other communication. We then bowed, withdrew, and returned to the frigate. We received no opposition either going or coming."*

From Rangoon to Ava is about 450 miles, and Government Expresses perform the journey in from ten to twelve days, so that to receive an answer in five weeks was quite practicable, provided the Cabinet of his Burmese Majesty did not require so long a time for deliberation as is sometimes found necessary in Europe.

As soon as he had dispatched his letter to the Governor, the Commodore sat down and wrote a laconic account of his proceedings to the Government of India, which he sent off to Calcutta by a steamer in charge of Captain Latter, the interpreter, who was deputed to explain the circumstances which had induced him to depart from his instructions.

Let us now see what those circumstances were:—

We have already stated that, on the arrival of the squadron in Rangoon river, an additional list of

* P. 30.

grievances was presented to the Commodore, on behalf of the British residents.* The statement pro-

* The Earl of Ellenborough made the following observations upon these proceedings:—(*House of Lords, February 16th*, 1852).

"He also wished to know whether, before any requisition was sent to the King of Ava, for reparation for the injuries inflicted on British subjects in Rangoon, any trustworthy officer of ours was sent there to ascertain the truth of their representations, and the extent of the injuries inflicted? He could recollect—it was not so distant an era—he could recollect the circumstances of a complaint which was brought under the notice of the British Government, by a certain Don Pacifico. Athens rejoiced in one Pacifico; but he could assure their lordships that there were dozens of Pacificoes at Rangoon. If there were not the grossest ignorance of, or the strangest misrepresentations about Rangoon, on the part of those who have written about it, Rangoon was the sink of Asia—the Alsatia to which all men went who could not keep a footing elsewhere. Persons of European origin, who had discovered that Asia was too hot to hold them, lived in Ava, and generally went to Rangoon, and there, under the same, or perhaps some other name, endeavoured to gain a new reputation or a new fortune. He should not wish the Government to take any political measures with regard to Ava, without sending an officer there to inquire into the circumstances. He regretted that this had not been done in the first instance; for it was reported that when the Commodore went to Rangoon with his fleet, he found circumstances very different from those which had been represented to him. The Don Pacificoes pushed off their boats, and went on board with representations of the damage which they said they had sustained."

[Commodore Lambert *had* directions to inquire into the justice of the demand which he was sent to make upon the Governor of Rangoon; but, instead of doing so, he took for granted the truth of fresh complaints brought against that officer, and acted upon them, without allowing the accused party the opportunity of answering one or the other of the charges.]

fesses to emanate from the "undersigned merchants and others, resident in Rangoon," but there are no signatures appended to the document, which contains a list of thirty-eight grievances, separately numbered, and mostly without dates. I am sorry that it is not compatible with that brevity which is above all things my object, to copy every one of these cases from the Blue Book, but I will give the first four on the list, as a fair specimen of the whole:—

LIST OF GRIEVANCES.

"1. A short time ago a charge was brought against Aga Sadduck, merchant in this town, by his wife, who had been separated from him fifteen years. No less a sum than 5,500 rupees was extorted from him by the present Governor.

"2. In the case of Goolam Hussain, a merchant of Rangoon, against whom a charge was brought of alleged faithlessness to his wife, the sum of 1500 rupees was extorted from him.

"3. In the case of Goolam Hussain (deceased), who was the owner of some mineral said to have had the virtue of completing the art of alchemy, the Governor wanted to get the mineral, which was refused him. In consequence of this, a charge of theft was trumped-up against him. The unfortunate man was seized, and flogged in the most cruel manner, from the effects of which he died soon after.

"4. Against Nicholas Johannes, an Armenian merchant, a story was got up, that, in a piece of ground which he had lately purchased, there was buried a jar of silver. The Government people were ordered to dig for the jar in question, when Mr. Johannes detected them in the act of slipping money into the jar. The Governor decreed that he should pay 1000 rupees for these proceedings of his own men."

The absurd list of grievances, of which the above are a sample, and which bring to recollection a popular volume of reports of our own police courts,

called "*Mornings at Bow Street*," was, as I have before stated, placed in the hands of Captain Latter, who proceeded to Calcutta to offer an explanation of the occurrences which had taken place at Rangoon. Arrived at his destination, he was requested to make his statement in writing, and I find in the Report presented by him to Mr. Halliday (the Secretary to the Government) that he gives as the reason why Commodore Lambert departed from the instructions laid down by the Governor-General for his guidance, that "the Commodore appeared to think that when the Governor-General of India came to know of these fresh instances of the Governor of Rangoon's misconduct, he, the Governor-General, might not consider the taking satisfaction for merely Messrs. Sheppard and Lewis's cases sufficient, but might wish to take further steps."* Let us see what the Governor-General has to say in reply.

The letter from the Government Secretary, Mr. Halliday, in answer to Commodore Lambert's communication, has been mutilated at the Board of Control, and an *Extract*, only, appears in the Blue Book. It may be therefore charitably hoped that the scissors in Cannon Row, and not the pen of the able Secretary at Fort William, are responsible for the inconsistency, not to say the absurdity of its contents.

"*The statements contained*," says the *Extract*, "*in the memorial presented by the British subjects at Rangoon must be received with caution; not having been made the subject of complaint at the time, these ad-*

* P. 28.

ditional cases cannot now be made the groundwork of an increased demand for compensation." It might naturally be supposed that, after this implied reflection upon the incautiousness of the Commodore, there would follow an expression of regret on behalf of the Governor-General at his having upon such insufficient grounds departed from the instructions laid down for his guidance; but the reader will find with astonishment the following paragraph in the same *Extract:*

"*Having regard to the additional long list which was delivered to you, of unwarrantable and oppressive acts committed upon British subjects by order of the Governor of Rangoon,* as well as to the personal bearing of that functionary towards the Commodore of the squadron, and to his obvious intention of resorting to the usual policy of the Burmese Court by interposing endless delays, and disregard of official communications addressed to him; his Lordship is of opinion that you exercised a sound discretion in cutting short all discussion with the local Governor, and in transmitting at once to the King of Ava the letter addressed to His Majesty by the Government of India."

The logic of this is akin to that which the wolf resorted to, upon a certain occasion in an argument with the lamb. "Be cautious how you listen to those Rangoon merchants," (says Mr. Halliday), "do not make their complaints the groundwork of a demand for compensation from the Governor of Rangoon; but you did right in making those complaints the 'groundwork' of a resolution to pass by the Governor of Rangoon, and send the Governor-General's letter to the Court of Ava, *asserting that he had refused all redress*, and demanding his recall." And again, for another specimen of the same logic:—

"So many fresh complaints were made to me by resident merchants on my arrival in the river of Rangoon," says Commodore Lambert, "that I resolved to hold no communication whatever with the Governor upon the business which I came here to settle."—"You were quite right in cutting short all discussion with the local Governor," replies Mr. Halliday, in the name of the Governor-General; "for it is very evident from his personal bearing towards you, and from his obvious intention to resort to the usual policy of the Burmese Court, by interposing endless delays, and disregarding official communications addressed to him, that you would have accomplished nothing by entering into negotiations with him."

Heaven defend me from ever finding myself in the position of the Governor of Rangoon, with no other appeal but to round shot and shells against the conclusions of such logicians, as the Governor-General of India, and Commodore Lambert!

The Commodore's brief and peremptory communication to the Governor of Rangoon, requiring him to forward to his Sovereign at Ava a letter demanding his own disgrace, and which I have given in a preceding page, is dated November 28th, 1851. An answer was demanded in five weeks. It arrived on the 1st January, being a day within the limited time. This having been the only instance in which the British Commander had preferred any request to the Governor, the promptitude of his compliance is a sufficient commentary on the passage quoted in the despatch from the Government of India, accusing

him of "endless delays and disregard of official communications addressed to him." It is but fair to adduce this fact, in favour of one who now disappears from the scene, without having been heard in his own defence.

The following letter from Commodore Lambert, to the President of the Council of India, opens the second act in this drama:—

"COMMODORE LAMBERT TO SIR JOHN LITTLER.

"*H.M.S. Fox, off Rangoon, January 1st*, 1852.

"I have the honour to acquaint you that an officer from the Court of Ava arrived on board of Her Majesty's ship under my command this morning, and delivered a letter from the King to the Government of India, in reply to the letter which I forwarded on the 28th of November.

"I also had the honour of a reply from his Majesty's Minister to my communication of that date; a copy is enclosed: from the purport of which it appears the Burmese Government have dismissed the Governor of Rangoon, *and promised to settle the demand made on them by the government of India.*

"I AM OF OPINION THAT THE KING IS SINCERE, AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL FULLY ACT UP TO WHAT HE HAS PROMISED.

"The future Governor of Rangoon, vested with full powers to settle the demands, is daily expected from Prome.

"In order that the Governor-General of India may be informed, as early as possible, of the state of affairs, I have dispatched the *Tenasserim* steam-vessel to Calcutta with the letter from the King of Ava, which has been translated by Mr. Edwards, in compliance with the directions he states he received."

It will be seen by the above that the Burmese Government complied instantly with the demand for the dismissal of the Governor of Rangoon, and promised redress for the injuries he had inflicted

upon British subjects. But I beg the especial attention of the reader to the paragraph printed in capitals, which expresses the belief of the writer in the sincerity of the King, and to which I shall again have occasion to refer. The whole case, as between the Governments of Burmah and of India, may henceforth be said to turn upon this passage.

The letter from the Burmese Government to the Government of India, and that to Commodore Lambert, are written not only in a courteous but a deferential tone. I will merely give the concluding sentence of the letter to the Commodore, showing, as it does, that the Court of Ava were under the impression that he would himself be the bearer of the answer to the letter of the Indian Government: "We have to request," say the Burmese Ministers, "that Commodore Lambert will, with friendly feeling, apprise us of the date of his departure from Rangoon, with the reply to the letter of the President of the Council of India."* I ask the reader to bear this in mind in connexion with what is to follow.

"On the 4th of January, the newly-appointed Governor, or Special Commissioner from the Court of Ava, arrived at Rangoon, with a numerous suite."† On the 5th, Commodore Lambert "sent Mr. Edwards, the assistant-interpreter, to ascertain when it would be convenient for him to receive an officer with a letter, stating the nature of the claims which the Government of British India had made on that of Burmah, and to say that when all had been adjusted he should do himself the honour

* P. 36. † Ibid.

of personally paying his respects to him: the reply to which was, that the Governor was ready at any time to receive communications from him; and the following day was fixed."* On this visit Mr. Edwards, who was clerk to Captain Latter, the interpreter to the squadron, and himself familiar with the Burmese language, was admitted to a personal interview with the new Governor, who at once consented, at the instance of Mr. Edwards, to remove the embargo by which the inhabitants had been hitherto prevented from holding communication with the ships or boats of the squadron.† It is important that this fact should be borne in mind, as an answer to the vague statements, for which no official proofs are afforded, that the new Governor had, on his first arrival, by his proclamation and other acts, shown an unfriendly disposition towards the British residents.

On the following day, the 6th, "the Commodore directed Captain Fishbourne, commanding Her Majesty's steamer *Hermes*, Captain Latter, and two officers of the *Hermes*, with Mr. Edwards, to proceed and deliver to the Governor the letter containing the demands he was charged to make. Captain Latter was at the time on board the *Proserpine*, finishing the Burmese translation of the letter which was to be given to the Governor; and to give him due warning of their approach, on his own responsibility, as there was no time to spare, he sent Mr. Edwards on shore to him, to give notice of their coming, and charged him to say that, as he had already shown

* P. 36. † P. 44.

his friendly feelings by his amicable expressions of the day before, with reference to the time of receiving a communication from Commodore Lambert, there would be no necessity for making any display in receiving them, so that there could be no necessity for any delay."*

Mr. Edwards landed and proceeded to the Governor's house; and now follows an incident which is of the utmost value as illustrative of the temper and disposition of the Governor towards his English visitors. The narrative is in Captain Latter's own words:—"At the foot of the outer steps, one of the Governor's suite drew his dagger on him, and threateningly asked him how he dared thus to approach the Governor's house. Mr. Edwards replied that he had no intention of entering without the Governor's permission. On being called into the Governor's presence, he stated that his life had been threatened, and mentioned what had occurred. The Governor sent for the offender, and punished him in the presence of Mr. Edwards in the usual Burmese manner, namely, by having him taken by the hair of the head, swung round three times, his face dashed to the ground, himself dragged out by the hair and pitched down stairs."†

(I ask the reader to observe that, within six hours of the infliction of this severe punishment for an insult committed upon a clerk, Commodore Lambert will have declared Rangoon in a state of blockade for an insult alleged to have been offered by the Governor to the superior officers of the squadron.)

* P. 44. † Ibid.

Mr. Edwards now delivered his message to the Governor, informing him of the deputation which was preparing to wait upon him:—the Governor said, "he wished to receive the communication through him and nobody else." Mr. Edwards replied "that that could not be for two reasons: first, that a communication of such importance could not be made through a person holding his subordinate position, being only a clerk under Captain Latter's orders; and secondly, that even if it could be so made, it was too late now, as the officers entrusted with it, one of whom was in rank next to the Commodore himself, were now preparing to come."* Mr. Edwards took his leave, and returned to the vessel.

Before we accompany the deputation to the Governor's house, let it be understood that no previous arrangement had been come to for its reception. To all who are acquainted with the customs of the East, and the childlike importance which Oriental nations, and especially the Burmese, attach to the ceremonial of visits, it must be evident that the course about to be pursued was pretty certain to end unsatisfactorily. The Governor had expressed his readiness to receive a *communication*, *not a deputation*, from Commodore Lambert, and he had entreated the clerk of the interpreter to bring it himself. Mr. Edwards could run in and out of his house freely, as bearer either of a message or letter, because, for a person of his inferior rank, no formal reception was necessary; but how "the Governor of all the lower Provinces, from Prome to the sea, including Rangoon," was to receive a body

* P. 45.

of officers of subordinate rank, without either offending them,* or for ever degrading himself in the eyes of his own people, was a question of etiquette not to be decided in a day. An Englishman, in such a dilemma, would order his servant to tell an unbidden caller he was "not at home." In the East, if the unwelcome visitor present himself in the middle of the day, the answer is, "My Master is asleep."

The deputation "landed at about noon, and proceeded to Mr. Birrell's house to procure horses to take them up, as the distance (about two miles) was too much to walk in the sun."† They were bearers of a letter from the Commodore, stating that "the object of his visit to Rangoon had been so satisfactorily met by the prompt course the Government of Ava had adopted in the permanent removal of the late Governor of Rangoon,"‡ that he felt assured of the amicable arrangement of the further matters to be discussed, and he concluded with a demand for the payment of 9,948 rupees (a fraction under a thousand pounds), and suggesting that a Resident Agent at Rangoon should henceforth be appointed by the Governor-General of India, to avoid a recurrence of differences between the two countries. *There was nothing in the contents of the letter which in the slightest degree called upon the writer to force the Governor to receive it by the hands of a deputation.*

* The reader will have seen a symptom of this in the allusion to the absence of a "crown," to the "common white dress," and the smoking of a cheroot, on the occasion of the interview of Captains Latter and Tarleton with the former Governor—*ante*, p. 37.

† P. 45. ‡ P. 37.

It is right that the leader of the deputation should be allowed to relate in his own words what followed:—

"COMMANDER FISHBOURNE TO COMMODORE LAMBERT.

"*H.M.'s steam-sloop 'Hermes,' off Rangoon, January 6th*, 1852.

"I have the honour to represent to you that, in pursuance of your orders of the 6th instant to me, to wait on the Governor of Rangoon with a letter from you, and also to inquire why it was that Mr. Edwards, while bearing a friendly message, had a sword placed at his breast, and threatened* within the precincts of the Governor's house?†

"I beg to state that I proceeded accordingly, accompanied by Captain Latter, and Mr. Edwards as interpreter, and Lieutenant Lawrence and Dr. McLeod, surgeon of Her Majesty's steam-sloop *Hermes*.

"When we arrived within a very short distance of the Governor's house, two sub-officials endeavoured to stop us. Captain Latter assuring me that this was intended rather as a slight, I did not deem it proper to stop. Mr. Edwards, however, communicated with them, on which they said that we could not see the Governor, but must go and wait on the Deputy-Governor.

"On arriving at the gate of the Governor's compound, there appeared to be a reluctance on the part of two or three, that we should enter.

"On arriving at the foot of the stairs leading to the Governor's ante-chamber, there appeared at the top, Moung Pogan, a man who had accompanied each deputation to the *Fox* in the professed character of interpreter, and another, I presume one of the Governor's retinue, the latter of whom stated that we could not see the Governor, as he was asleep, and asked if we could not wait till he awoke. This he was informed by Captain Latter that we

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* *Sic* in orig.

† Remembering the summary punishment already inflicted upon the wretched offender in this case, a recurrence to it as a grievance looks very much like a desire to find a ground of quarrel.

could not do, and that the Governor, if asleep, must be waked up, and informed that the Commander of one of the ships of war, bearing a letter from Commodore Lambert, waited to see him; on this, he, together with Moung Pogan, went into the Governor's house, apparently to convey the message.

"They soon after returned, the one stating that the Governor was a great man, and was asleep and could not be awaked, but Moung Pogan called Mr. Edwards on one side and asked him to go up and speak with the Governor; understanding this by his grimace, without waiting to be confirmed in the correctness of my conclusion, I said he could not go, whereupon Captain Latter asked me for your letter (which I gave him), that he might point to it while explaining that it was one of a most peaceful kind, and insisted upon the necessity of our being received; whereupon the attendant and Moung Pogan went again, as it were, to see the Governor, saying that we had better go and stand under the shed, a place where the common people usually assembled.

"Meanwhile, expressing the great inconvenience of staying in the sun, I was going up stairs with a view to sit in the Governor's waiting-room, but Captain Latter interposed, and said it was not according to etiquette; I was informed also that my going under the shed alluded to, for protection from the sun, would be considered by them as degrading; I refrained from going, or rather returned to my original position at the foot of the stairs, for I had gone under the shed.

"The attendant and Moung Pogan returned, the former again repeating that the Governor was asleep, and Moung Pogan again expressed a wish that Mr. Edwards should go up, and, on this being again refused, proposed that your letter should be sent to the Governor by them, which I considered it my duty to refuse; Captain Latter, at the same time, explaining that if it were proper to send the letter by them, it were unnecessary to have sent the captain of an English man-of-war, and the next in command to the Commodore, with it.

"About this time an officer came up, whom I recognised as one who had been on a deputation from the Governor to the Commodore; and, being anxious to have matters settled amicably, I requested Captain Latter to explain to him how improper the treat-

ment we had received had been; that he must be well aware that every deputation from the Governor and Deputy-Governor had been received by the Commodore at all times, and with courtesy; and, if it had been that the Commodore had been asleep, his principal officer would have had him awakened, and made acquainted with the fact of a deputation being in waiting for an audience with him, that he might receive it; and to impress upon him the propriety and necessity for me, bearing a friendly letter from the Commodore, being received immediately; for if I was not, I must consider it a premeditated insult, and go away and report the circumstance.

"I was quite satisfied of the insincerity of the statement relating to the Governor being asleep, from the manner of the attendant, and from the fact of Moung Pogan asking Mr. Edwards to go up to the Governor, and indeed from his appearing at the Governor's when we arrived—for, when we were getting our horses to ride up, this Moung Pogan appeared, and was asked by Captain Latter if the Governor knew we were coming, and he said he did not know; then Captain Latter said, 'You had better go up, and say that we are coming;' to which he answered, 'I am a subject of Burmah, and cannot take a message to my Lord the Governor, unless I had permission from him.'

"Finding, after some little time, that the officer alluded to above did not return, I conceived it to be my duty to return, and report the circumstance; in doing so, I returned most leisurely, to give them time to send after me with an apology; and not finding my boat at the landing-place, I waited her arrival (for the same purpose), rather than come off earlier in a merchant-ship's boat, which was offered me."

On their return to the frigate, Commander Fishbourne reported (as above) to Commodore Lambert, the treatment the deputation had received. The Commodore appears to have instantly decided upon the course he would pursue:—without affording time or opportunity to the Governor to explain or apologise for what had occurred, without referring

the matter to the Government of India, which he might have done in a few days, or to the Government of Ava as he had done before, he resolved, that very day, to enter upon hostilities with the Burmese nation. "The Commodore forthwith directed a boat to be sent to summon some of the English residents from the shore. On their arrival, he warned them to be prepared to leave the town during the afternoon, and requested them to give notice to all other British subjects. He ordered all the boats of the squadron to assist in bringing them off, and a steamer to be off the wharf to cover their embarkation."* They were allowed to leave, without molestation.

"The British subjects, men, women and children, to the amount of several hundred, took refuge during the afternoon on board the shipping in the river, and before the evening had set in, the vessels had commenced dropping down the river."†

"It was dark before the Commodore issued orders to seize what was usually styled, the 'Yellow Ship.'‡ This ship, which belonged to the King of Ava, was anchored a little above the squadron. The same day the following notification of blockade appeared:— Let the reader recollect that all these occurrences took place on the afternoon and night of the 6th January, in consequence of the deputation of that day '*having been kept waiting for a full quarter of an hour in the sun.*'"§

"NOTIFICATION.

"*In virtue of authority from the Governor-General of British*

* P. 46. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

§ P. 72. Captain Latter's Narrative.

India, I do hereby declare the rivers of Rangoon, the Bassein, and the Salween above Moulmein, to be in a state of blockade; and, with the view to the strict enforcement thereof, a competent force will be stationed in, or near, the entrance of the said rivers immediately.

"Neutral vessels, lying in either of the blockaded rivers, will be permitted to retire within twenty days from the commencement of the blockade.

"Given under my hand, on board Her Britannic Majesty's frigate *Fox*, off the town of Rangoon, the 6th of January, 1852.

"GEORGE R. LAMBERT,

"*Commodore in Her Britannic Majesty's Navy.*"

"By command of the Commodore,

"J. L. SOUTHEY, *Secretary.*"

Let us now pause for a moment to recapitulate the facts which we have been narrating. It has been seen that Commodore Lambert, setting aside the instructions he had received, refused to communicate with the former Governor of Rangoon, on the plea of a long list of fresh complaints having been preferred against him; and that the Governor-General of India, whilst refusing to espouse those grievances, had sanctioned the course which the Commodore had taken upon himself to pursue. We have seen how Commodore Lambert entered into correspondence with the Court of Ava, although instructed not to do so until he had been refused reparation by the Governor; and how he remained off Rangoon, waiting the reply, which he peremptorily demanded in thirty-five days, notwithstanding that the Governor-General had intimated to him that, pending the return of an answer, he might proceed to the Persian Gulf; and we have seen that these

deviations from his instructions received the sanction of the Governor-General of India.

Need we wonder at what followed? In the teeth of an express injunction, that, even should the reply to his demand for redress be unfavourable, no act of hostility was to be committed, "*nor until definite instructions regarding such hostilities shall be given by the Government of India,*"* Commodore Lambert commenced hostilities, by seizing the King's ship, and declaring the coast in a state of blockade, and this notwithstanding that he had himself five days previously, in his letter to Sir John Littler, declared his belief *that the King of Ava was sincere in his promise of reparation* "*and would fully act up to what he had promised;*" and to crown all, let it be added that these hostile acts were committed before the answer from the King of Ava (which the latter believed Commodore Lambert was himself carrying to Calcutta) could have been received by the Governor-General of India, he being at that time in camp at Benares. It may be added that, when received, it elicited from the Indian Government the following testimony to its pacific and conciliatory character.

"The letter addressed by the Ministers of the King of Ava to the Government of India was friendly in its tone, and entirely satisfactory in its tenor. The Court of Ava promised at once to remove the Governor of Rangoon, and to inquire into, in order to redress, the injuries complained of.

"If there had been any good reason to doubt the sincerity of these assurances, their prompt fulfilment must have cleared away those doubts. The offending Governor was at once removed, and his successor took his place at Rangoon.†

* P. 14. † Ibid.

And here I will only mention for future comment the fact, the almost incredible fact, that there does not appear, in the whole of the papers presented to Parliament, one word or syllable of remonstrance or remark on the part of the Governor-General in vindication of his own authority—no, not even after Commodore Lambert, as if in very derision and mockery, had in his notification declared the coast in a state of blockade, "*in virtue of authority from the Governor-General of British India.*"*

The conduct of the Governor of Rangoon is now a subject of minor importance;—the question for the statesman, the historian, and the moralist is—were we justified, whatever his behaviour was, with the known friendly disposition of the King, in commencing war against the Burmese nation? Let us, however, see if the papers before us will throw any light upon the origin of the treatment which the English deputation received at the house of the Governor.

And in the first place, as it is only fair that he should be heard in his own defence, I insert a letter of explanation addressed by the Governor of Rangoon to the Governor-General of India. The letter bears no date, but it was delivered to Commodore Lambert on the 8th January:—

"LETTER DELIVERED TO COMMODORE LAMBERT BY A DEPUTATION FROM THE GOVERNOR OF RANGOON.

"I, MAHAMENGHLA MENG KHANNYGYAN, appointed by the King of Ava (here follow the Royal titles) and by the great Ministers of State, after due consultation, to rule all the Southern

* P. 51.

Districts (*i. e.*, from Prome to Martaban, including Rangoon), and to have my residence at Rangoon, inform the English rulers and war-chiefs:.

"That in conformity with the demand made by the English rulers, that the former Governor of Rangoon should be removed from his situation, on account of having oppressed and maltreated British merchants trading with the port of Rangoon, and in order that a proper person might be appointed as Governor of Rangoon who would be capable of protecting the merchants and poor people, the former Governor was recalled to the royal presence. A letter was sent to the English rulers, informing them that a proper investigation into all complaints should be made, and I arrived at Rangoon.

"Being actuated by the highest feelings of friendship to Commodore Lambert, whilst I was intending to send for him, the interpreter, Edwards, came and told me that he had come to acquaint me that Commodore Lambert wished to have an interview with me; and, as I was fearful that any of the others might behave discourteously, and not according to the rules of etiquette, I decreed that the interpreter, Edwards, might come with the letter or communication. But after some time, four inferior officers, an American clergyman, called Kincaid, and the interpreter Edwards, came in a state of intoxication, and, contrary to custom, entered the compound on horseback; and whilst I was asleep, and the Deputy Governor was waking me, used violent and abusive language. They then went away, and conveyed an irritating message to the Commodore; and that officer, listening to their improper and unbecoming representations, and with a manifest inclination to implicate the two nations in war, on the 6th of January, 1852, at night, with secrecy, took away the ship belonging to His Majesty the King of Ava.

"I however, in consequence of there being a treaty of peace between the two nations, did not re-seize the vessel; and though they were the bearers of a Royal message, on account of their unjustifiable conduct.* . The frigate stuck on the shore near Dallah. I did not, however, molest them, or destroy them, but acted worthily to these unworthy men; and I now represent this conduct of Commodore Lambert to the English rulers, who

* *Sic* in orig.

came from one country to another, and behaved in a manner unbecoming an Ambassador."*

Passing by the charge of "intoxication" as unworthy of notice, we come to the real ground of offence in the fact of "four *inferior* officers" having, "contrary to custom, entered the compound on horseback," or in other words, having ridden, without invitation, into the open court of the Governor's palace. The reader, if he has perused Mr. Crawfurd's interesting narrative of his mission to Ava, in 1826, or if he enjoy the pleasure of the acquaintance of that best living authority upon the habits of the Burmese, will have no difficulty in understanding the cause of the unseemly wrangle which took place between the British deputation and the Governor's attendants. One of the gravest questions of Burmese etiquette was involved in the approach of a visitor, whether on an elephant or on horseback, to the Governor's residence. The English officers outraged, perhaps unconsciously, his most cherished sense of dignity and decorum, in riding into the Governor's compound. They had no right, being subordinate in rank, to a formal reception. Commodore Lambert was alone entitled to that honour, and the preliminary arrangements for their meeting would have, perhaps, called for the display of great tact and temper. In all probability, the settling of the ceremonial of an interview would have taken more time than the negotiation for the payment of the thousand pounds. But, surely, Englishmen, who have the most formal Court in Christendom, ought not to be the least tolerant of Asiatic ceremonies.

* P. 40.

Commander Fishbourne seems to have thought it quite sufficient that Captain Latter dispatched Moung Pogan a little in advance of the deputation "to say that we are coming." What should we think of an American deputation who required us to dispense with our Lord Chamberlains, Gold-sticks, and Beef-eaters, and receive them after the simple fashion of the White House at Washington? Might we not probably doubt if they were sober?

In a word, the Governor was "asleep," *anglice*, "not at home," to avoid the embarrassment and danger of an interview. But he did not refuse to receive the Commodore's letter; he requested Mr. Edwards to bring it, and moreover, according to Commander Fishbourne's statement, Moung Pogan and the attendants in the Governor's compound begged to be allowed to convey the letter to their master. But I find that the Governor-General of India, in a long and elaborate Minute of February 12th, in which the incidents of the rupture are recapitulated, admits the breach of etiquette on the part of our officers:—

"*Assuming*," says the Governor-General, "*that there was in the deputing of these officers a neglect of strict form*, although (be it observed) no such forms had been attended to on his own part, by the Governor of Rangoon, whose letter had been conveyed to the Commodore by officers of the humblest rank, and admittance had been freely granted to them; *admitting, I say, that ceremonial had not been duly observed*, the omission affords no justification whatever, for the insult and contumely which were publicly heaped upon these officers, the known agents, for the time, of the Government they served."

And again,

"The persons of the officers were known, their mission was

known, their approach had been announced; *and although the omission of ceremonial form to which I have alluded, might have given to the Governor a plausible pretext for declining to receive the officers in person,* his own conduct in the transmission of his communications had greatly weakened that pretext; while nothing could justify the gross, deliberate, and studied affront which was put upon the British Government, in the person of its officers, conveying a communication on its behalf to the Representative of the King of Ava."*

The same loose and illogical reasoning which I have before had to notice, characterises these passages from the Governor-General's "Minute." What could possibly be more inconclusive than the argument, if I may call it so, in the above extract, where, after admitting the breach of etiquette on the part of our officers, it is contended that the Governor of Rangoon had no right to complain, because he had himself sent letters to Commodore Lambert, "by officers of the humblest rank, and admittance had been freely granted to them." This might have been a valid plea if the complaint of the Governor had been that his visitors were of too low a rank; but it was just the reverse—the very thing desired by him was, that the Commodore would follow his example, and forward his letter by a person in the humble position of Mr. Edwards, or one of his own attendants. The embarrassment of the Governor arose from his being called on to give audience to visitors who were not his equals in rank, and who yet could not be treated as inferiors or messengers. To Englishmen, all this appears excessively childish, and it is because it does so, that an English Governor need not trouble himself about such matters;—not so with the

* P. 65.

Burmese:—"With them," says the Governor-General in the same "Minute," "forms are essential substance, and the method of communication and the style of address, are not words but acts."* And it is worthy of notice that, at a subsequent stage of this affair, in the "Minute" for the guidance of General Godwin, when he was dispatched in command of the expedition to Rangoon, the Governor-General, after ordering him in a certain contingency to arrange a meeting with the chief officer of the King of Ava, adds:—"the forms of such meetings should be arranged previously, and a record made of them; it being understood that they are to be the recognized forms of reception of the British agent for the future."† It is a most perplexing fact throughout these papers, that, although it is apparent that the Governor-General perceives the rashness of the acts of Commodore Lambert, and even provides against their repetition in future, and whilst it is impossible to doubt that he must feel the humiliation of having his authority entirely set aside—yet not one word falls from him, to show that he was more than a passive looker-on at the contemptuous disregard of his own instructions!

But to return to the scene of operations before Rangoon, where, as will be recollected, Commodore Lambert had declared the coast of Burmah in a state of blockade, and seized the King's ship, because his officers had been kept a "full quarter of an hour" waiting in the sun.

Much has been said about the arrogance of the Burmese, their contempt for other nations, and their

* P. 66. † P. 83.

desire to enter upon hostilities with the English. The papers before us prove, on the contrary, that they felt the utmost dread of our power. A covey of partridges with a hawk in view, ready to make its fell swoop, or a flock of sheep with a wolf's eyes glaring into the fold, could not shrink more timidly from their terrible and irresistible foe than did the Burmese officials at the prospect of a hostile collision with England. Captain Latter says that so great was their apprehension when the Commodore seized the King's ship, that "they even seemed alarmed for the safety of their own heads."*

"On Wednesday, the 7th January, at day-break, Her Majesty's Steamer, *Hermes*, took the King's ship in tow, and the whole squadron proceeded down the river a short distance, the frigate remaining a little below Dallah."† I must here introduce the reader to an interesting personage, in the Governor of Dallah.

"But whilst the conduct of the Rangoon authorities was so unsatisfactory," says Captain Latter, in his narrative of the earlier events before the arrival of the new Governor, "a marked exception existed in the person of the Governor of Dallah, a town on the other side of the river. Commodore Lambert, from information he had received of the favourable disposition of the Governor, had paid him an unofficial visit, in order, personally, to impress upon an officer of his rank and respectable character, his (the Commodore's) peaceful views and wishes. The Commodore was received by the Dallah Governor with the greatest courtesy and respect; and, throughout the whole of the subsequent annoying transactions, the conduct of the Dallah Governor was all that could be expected from a good man and a gentleman."‡

Let us now continue the narrative of the events of

* Captain Latter's Narrative, p. 47. † P. 47. ‡ P. 43.

the 7th of January, as they are given to us by Captain Latter.

"During the morning of this day, the Dallah Governor came off, being sent by the Governor of Rangoon to see what he could do in the business. The Commodore informed him that, in consideration of his (the Commodore's) personal regard for him, and as a mark of the appreciation in which he held his admirable conduct during the whole time the expedition had been lying off Rangoon, he would in a measure deviate from his first intentions, and that he would again open communications with the present Governor, if that officer would come himself on board his frigate, and express his regret for the insult that he had offered to the British Flag, in the persons of the deputation sent to him the previous day. The Dallah Governor took his leave, and, after some hours, the Under-Governor of Rangoon, with the interpreter, Moung Pogan, made his appearance. He was the bearer of a letter* from the Governor, declaring that he really was asleep when the deputation reached him; that he did not wish to see a deputation of inferior officers; that he would see the Commodore, and wished the Commodore to go to him. He did not in the slightest degree express any regret or sorrow for what had occurred. The Commodore informed the Under-Governor that he would not swerve from the ultimatum he had already given through the Governor of Dallah, and he gave him till noon of the next day to make up his mind. A good deal more conversation took place, owing to the Under-Governor endeavouring to shake the Commodore's determination. Both he and the others contradicted themselves every few minutes; now asserting that the Governor was asleep at the time the deputation came to his door; next asking why Mr. Edwards did not come to him when he sent to call him. At one time the Under-Governor denied being at the interview in which Mr. Edwards complained of having been threatened with a dagger; then, when pressed, acknowledging that he was at the interview, but that he had neither seen or heard anything about it. It would be as tedious as it would be unnecessary to enter into a detail of all the lies and subterfuges they were guilty of, till at last they left the

* This letter is not given, as it ought to have been.

frigate, when they complained of the seizure of the King's ship. The Commodore informed them that he had seized it because it was the King's ship; that had it been a common Burmese merchant-ship, he would not have taken possession of it; and that he seized it, as much for the purpose of showing them that the acts of subordinates, if not promptly disowned and punished by those whom they represented, would be inevitably visited on the principals; *that he had no doubt that when the King of Ava became acquainted with the insolent conduct of his subordinates to those who came to make a friendly communication, refusing to receive such communication, and thus jeopardizing his Throne, he would visit them with condign punishment;* that if the Governor of Rangoon wished to avoid such a fate, he had only to accede to his (the Commodore's) demands in every thing; that then, when all his demands had been fully complied with, he would give back the King's ship, and salute the flag of Burmah with a royal salute. He furthermore impressively added that, until further instructions came from the Governor-General of India, of which they would be duly informed, nothing should induce him to act aggressively, unless they commenced hostilities themselves; and he concluded by saying that, should any detriment occur to the King of Ava, from what had occurred, it would wholly rest upon the head of the Governor of Rangoon."*

It will be seen that the difficulty between the Commodore and the Governor turns still upon a point of etiquette. The Governor complains of the deputation of "inferior officers"—wishes to see the Commodore himself, and asks him to come on shore to him; the latter insists upon the former going on board his ship to make an apology; instead of which the Governor of Rangoon sends his Deputy-Governor, for he himself would probably prefer death to the dishonour which he would suffer, in the eyes of his people, if he were to submit to the humiliating terms proposed to him. And I will here mention the fact, that when these conditions were made known to

* P. 47.

the Governor-General of India, he, *without comment*, expunged from the ultimatum the harsh condition requiring a visit to the Commodore's ship, and merely demanded a written apology.* But this altercation between two subordinate officers is a matter of secondary importance; the real question being whether Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India, who adopted as his own all Commodore Lambert's acts, was justified in commencing hostilities against the Burmese nation, after the proofs afforded of the fair and conciliatory disposition of the King? The passage in the above extract which I have marked with italics, appears to me to decide the question; for there we find the Commodore himself declaring, *after* he had seized the royal ship, his belief that the King was still actuated by such just and friendly feelings, that he would visit with condign punishment those who had insulted the deputation. *What possible pretence could there be then for committing an act of hostility against him?*

During the next day, Thursday, the 8th, the Dallah Governor came on board the frigate, and stated that "he was very anxious that the Commodore should give up the King's ship, as that any punishment the King might inflict upon his servants for its loss might be partially visited upon him, as the ship was taken away in the waters between his government and that of the Governor of Rangoon."† This request was refused, but, as a mark of esteem for the Governor of Dallah, the Commodore prolonged the time for the Rangoon Governor to accede to his terms from noon till sunset. The Commodore now

* P. 53. † P. 48.

received a message from the Governor of Rangoon, "to the effect that, if he attempted to take the King of Ava's ship out of the river, he would fire on him."*

I have already stated that on this day a letter of explanation from the Governor of Rangoon† to the Governor-General of India was delivered by a deputation to Commodore Lambert, to be forwarded to Calcutta.

Now follows the catastrophe, which must be described in Commodore Lambert's own words:—

"Shortly after daylight this morning (January 10th) I weighed, and caused the merchant-vessels to follow me. They were assisted and guarded by the East India Company's steam-vessel *Phlegethon*, and the boats of this ship. *On my arrival off the great stockade, I anchored, and found it occupied by a considerable force.* An immense number of large war-boats, with guns mounted in them, were also lying close to the shore, and at the entrance of a small creek, under the walls of the stockade, and were fully manned. Their behaviour was exceedingly threatening, but I refrained from interfering with them, as I had promised yesterday that I would not fire on the Burmese first.

"Her Majesty's steam-sloop *Hermes*, with the King of Ava's ship in tow, passed us at half-past nine, when the stockade opened a sharp cannonade on Her Majesty's ship *Fox*, which was instantly returned with shot and shell, and the Burmese battery was in a short time silenced. On the smoke clearing away, not a person was to be seen on the shore or in the boats.‡

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* P. 41. † Ante p. 49.

‡ On the news of this event reaching England, it gave rise to a discussion in the House of Lords, when the following remark was made by Lord Derby, then Prime Minister (April 5th, 1852):—

"On receiving information of the insults offered to Commander Fishbourne, Commodore Lambert said it was impossible that he could continue communications with such a government, and actually withdrew;—*but unfortunately, as I think, by way of re-*

"*Our fire, I have no doubt, must have done great execution, for I have reason to believe that at least* 3000 *men were opposed against us.* One or two of the enemy's shot struck the *Fox*, but did very trifling damage. Their shot in general fell short, a few only passing over us, and their small arms did no execution.'

"I then sent the *Phlegethon* and the boats of the *Fox* close in shore, to destroy the war-boats, which was easily accomplished, and their guns spiked, or thrown into the river. Their crews, being unable to stand our fire, had fled on the first broadside

"The *Hermes*, in the meantime, engaged a stockade on the opposite side of the river, which had opened a fire on her; her heavy guns and a few rockets soon silenced this battery, and compelled the Burmese to retire."*

A word or two in the way of recapitulation. On the 6th, at night, Commodore Lambert seized the King's ship, which he held in his possession at anchor opposite the town for three days, during which time the Burmese made no attempt to retake it; but, on the contrary, conciliatory visits were paid to the Commodore, by the authorities of the highest rank in the neighbourhood, (short of the Governor of the district); and letters of explanation to the Governor-General and to Commodore Lambert, as well as friendly messages, were forwarded from the Governor of Rangoon himself. There is no reason to suppose that any act of hostility would have been committed, had the King's ship been merely kept at anchor, in the power of the British. But to have allowed a Burmese ship of war to be towed out of the river by foreigners, passing under the great stockade, or battery, without molestation, would have involved the disgrace

taliation for the insults offered to his officer, taking on himself, without previous instructions, to seize a vessel of the King of Ava, which he carried with him."

* P. 41.

and destruction of those who were responsible to the King of Ava for the protection of his property. Notice was therefore given that if the Commodore attempted to remove the King's ship out of the river he would be fired upon: when, as if determined to force a collision, taking his own vessel, the *Fox*, opposite the great stockade, he there dropped anchor. The *Hermes* passed with the King's ship in tow, and the stockade opened a fire, apparently with no other object but to save the honour of the Burmese flag, for upon the discharge of a broadside from the *Fox* the battery was silenced, and its garrison fled. "Great execution," we are told, was done by our fire: I hope not; for in the eyes of God, and of just men, every life sacrificed must, I fear, be regarded as a case of murder.

Let us suppose that, instead of Rangoon, the scene of these operations had been at Charleston. There is at present pending between this country and the United States a question of difficulty and delicacy, arising out of the conduct of the authorities of South Carolina at Charleston, who have seized a British sailor, on no better plea than that his skin is not so white as that of his captors, and subjected him to confinement in a common gaol, until the departure of his vessel. We shall suppose that the commander of our squadron on that station, Commodore Lambert by name, has been dispatched to demand redress. On his arrival at Charleston, he finds the Governor such an impracticable pro-slavery character, that he addresses a letter of complaint to the Federal Government at Washington, in reply to which he receives a conciliatory answer, assuring him that everything

possible shall be done to remedy the grievance. On announcing the receipt of this communication to his own Government, the Commodore adds, "I am of opinion that the *President* is sincere, and that his Government will fully act up to what he has promised."* Before this announcement has reached London, where it would be made the subject of complimentary remark by the Minister of the Crown,† we will suppose that an insult has been offered by the Governor of South Carolina to some officers of the British squadron—the bearers of a letter from the Commodore. A ship of war belonging to the Government of the United States, lying at Charleston, is instantly seized, and, notwithstanding notice was given that, if an attempt should be made to carry her off, the Commodore's ships would be fired upon from the shore, she is towed out to sea, the American

* *Ante.* p. 37.

† When the news of the removal of the Governor of Rangoon reached England, and before the subsequent events were known, it elicited from the representative of the Whig Administration in the *House of Lords* the following remarks:—"The events proved," said the Marquis of Lansdowne, "the propriety and justice of the Commodore's mode of proceeding; for that letter addressed to the King of Ava was taken into consideration by him, and his Majesty felt that reparation was due to us, and immediately removed the Governor from his post. *I have no reason to presume that the redress asked for will not fairly be given. The course taken by the King has been extremely just;* and he has sent two persons to the spot, in order to inquire into the various acts of injustice, and settle the amount of compensation to be paid in respect of them." Long before these observations were made (February 16th 1852), Commodore Lambert had carried off this "just" king's ship, and done "great execution" amongst his subjects.

battery opening fire as they pass, and receiving in return a broadside which does "great execution." What would have been the response to this news when it reached England? Can any one doubt that one unanimous cry would have been raised for the disgrace and punishment of Commodore Lambert? And why is a different standard of justice applied in the case of Burmah? Ask your own conscience, reader, if you be an Englishman, whether any better answer can be given than that America is powerful, and Burmah weak.

It might be expected that, having carried off a ship of war and killed a number of the Burmese forces, sufficient "satisfaction" had been obtained for a claim of £920. But the coast of Burmah was still declared in a state of blockade.

On the day after the removal of the King's ship, the following petition from the resident merchants, prepared at the instance of the Governor, was sent by a flag of truce to Commodore Lambert, but no answer was returned:—*

Petition from the Armenian, Mogul, Soorattee, Nurrapoor, Parsee, Chuliah, and Mussulman Inhabitants and Merchants of Rangoon, to Commodore Lambert.

"*January 11th*, 1852.

"The two great countries being in peace, your petitioners have continued with their wives and children for many years to reside and trade in this country.

"The late Governor (of Rangoon) having been dismissed for unjustifiable and improper conduct, was taken to the Golden Feet (capital of Ava), in obedience to the royal order, for punishment.

"Subsequently, the Aye Bain (present Governor) having arrived,

* P. 42.

was prepared to meet and discuss with the Commodore whatever remained to be adjusted. *Not having been enabled to do so, he has sent for and desired your petitioners to make the following representation respecting the communication made to the Governor of Dallah, viz.*

"That he is willing to abide by the provisions of the Yandaboo Treaty.

"To agree to a Resident being appointed.

"To pay the sum of upwards of 9000 rupees.

"And to have a Residency House erected.

"In accordance with the Royal order, the above subjects were to have been discussed by the two great men in an amicable and friendly manner, but Commodore Lambert has not given him an opportunity of doing so.

"Your petitioners and the merchants, both great and small, at Rangoon and at the capital of Ava amount to upwards of 600 souls, 'who are in a condition of being strandad in shallow water.'

"Your petitioners, therefore, most humbly entreat you, in the name of Almighty God, to have pity upon them, and to save and protect them from ruin and destruction."

Abandoning in despair any further attempts to propitiate Commodore Lambert, the Burmese now addressed themselves to *Colonel Bogle, Commissioner in the Tenasserim Provinces*, a territory which was wrested from Burmah in the war of 1826, and which lies upon the frontier of that empire. To him the Governor of Rangoon forwarded, on the 16th January, a letter for the Governor-General of India, the contents of which were almost a repetition of the letter delivered by a deputation from the same functionary to Commodore Lambert on the 8th. The Governor of Martaban, a Burmese port situated opposite to Moulmein, the principal sea-port of Tenasserim, forwarded also at the same time the following letter to Colonel Bogle:

"*The Governor of Martaban to the British Commissioner at Moulmein.*

"*January 21st*, 1852.

"Tikla Myo tsa Motama Myo Mingyee (Martaban Governor) Mingyee Maha thinka yah, informs the Moulmein Mingyee and Ayabing Ming (Commissioner and Principal Assistant Commissioner), that, forasmuch as peace and tranquillity is the sole object in view between the two great kingdoms, a friendly intercourse being established, traffic has hitherto been carried on between the merchants of the two countries without interruption. In consequence, however, of complaints have been preferred against the former Rangoon Myowoon, that he oppressed foreign merchants, certain English officers were dispatched on a mission to represent them. These officers arrived, and thirty-five days being fixed as the period within which their dispatches were to be transmitted, and the Royal answer received, *while yet the mandate issued from the Shuay Shoot Tah (the Golden Royal Court) was on its way to India, there came the intelligence that the English officers had attacked and carried off the King's ship out of the port of Rangoon. Now the Governor-General of India simply appointed the Mission to treat; they had no instructions to fight;* and, should this capture of His Majesty's ship prove the occasion of a fierce war, the trade between the two countries will be sacrificed for an unprofitable quarrel. It is not right that there should be a war. The character of those in authority depends upon peace, and a free and uninterrupted trade; hence, therefore, the dispatch of these letters; and it is requested that the English Government will return a full and explicit answer to them."

The common sense and logic of the above, as well as its philanthropic sentiments, present, I am sorry to say, a most favourable contrast to the Christian side of this correspondence. This letter ought, in fact, to have been written by the Governor-General of India to Commodore Lambert, calling on him to justify his seizure of the royal ship, whilst the King of Ava's letter was still on its way to India, and reminding

him that he was sent on a mission to treat, but that he had strict injunctions not to fight.

In this and the other Burmese letters written after the rupture, the seizure of the King's ship is alluded to with an emphasis which shows that, although certainly unacquainted with the writings of Vattel or Puffendorf, the writers are well aware that it constituted an act of war; and since no declaration of war had been published, and seeing that they still regarded Commodore Lambert as merely the bearer of a communication to their Government from a superior power, to whom an answer conceding all that was demanded had been returned by the King of Ava, they were perplexed at the conduct of the English Commander, and sometimes almost doubted whether he was really the person he represented himself to be. "Unlike a man of the world, son of a great country," says the Governor of Rangoon, "and actuated only by a wish to create a quarrel, he *covertly unmoored and carried off the great ship.*"* And in another letter he says, "On the 6th January, at midnight, Commodore Lambert took away the ship belonging to His Majesty the King of Ava. On the following day, I sent the Deputy-Governor of Rangoon to represent to Commodore Lambert that the act of taking His Majesty's ship *by stealth, and unjustly, was in no wise in accordance with the acts proper to two great nations.*"† "In a manner unbecoming the sons of a great nation," says the Governor of Bassein, "*you secretly stole and took away the ship belonging to the King of Ava.*"‡ And

* P. 58. † P. 63. ‡ P. 71.

again, to quote from another letter from the Rangoon Governor: "Commodore Lambert expresses surprise at having been fired at by the officers in charge of the stockades of Dumont and Thilawa, but it is a matter of greater surprise that the Royal ship of His Majesty should have been seized at midnight, contrary to the custom of great nations and the rules of justice."* In fact, throughout all the subsequent correspondence, there is, on the part of the Burmese, a constant recurrence to this outrageous act of violence. They attached comparatively little importance to the blockade of their ports;† but neither the French nor the Americans could apparently have felt more keenly than they did the insult offered in the seizure, "at midnight," of the King's ship.

Let the reader of the few remaining pages of this narrative always bear in mind that the two contending parties, from this moment, stand in the following relative positions towards each other. The English complain that the Burmese have extorted 9948 rupees, (a fraction under a thousand pounds) from British subjects, and that a deputation of their officers has been kept waiting "a full quarter of an hour" in the sun; and, on the other side, it must be remembered that the English have carried off the only ship of war belonging to the Burmese Government, (worth probably ten times as much as 9948 rupees,) doing in the act "great execution" amongst their troops, without suffering any loss or injury themselves, and that they have established a blockade of all the Burmese ports.

* P. 56. † P. 68.

I have said that a letter was sent by the Governor of Rangoon, through Commodore Lambert, to the Governor-General of India, on the 8th of January, two days after the seizure of the King's ship. The reader is requested to reperuse that letter.* It will be seen that, after an explanatory allusion to his own conduct towards the deputation, which he charges with having been intoxicated, the Governor makes a complaint that the Commodore had a "manifest inclination to implicate the two nations in war;" and he concludes with these words, "I now represent this conduct of Commodore Lambert to the English rulers, who came from one country to another, and behaved in a manner unbecoming an ambassador."

The reply of the Government of India is dated January 26th. The letter begins with an expression of extreme surprise that the Governor of Rangoon had listened to the falsehoods of his servants respecting the inebriety of the officers composing the deputation, and then proceeds to complain of the disrespectful conduct shown to them "at the gates of the Governor's-palace."†.

"If," continues the despatch, "those officers were inferior in rank, as the Governor now declares, and if the customs of his country were thereby violated, or any apparent disrespect were shown to the Governor, or his Sovereign, the departure from custom ought to have been properly represented by the Governor, when the error would, doubtless, have been corrected."

After declaring that the Government of India would not allow its officers to suffer insult without requiring reparation, the letter concludes with the following specific demands :—

* Ante, pp. 49, 50. † P. 52.

"1. The Governor will express, in writing, to the Government of India, his deep regret that Commander Fishbourne and the officers deputed by Commodore Lambert to the Governor, should have been treated with disrespect, and exposed to public insult at his own residence, on the 6th of January.

"2. He will consent to pay immediately the compensation already demanded of 9,948 rupees, for injuries done to Captain Sheppard and Captain Lewis.

"3. He will consent to receive, with the honour due to the Representative of the British Government, the accredited Agent whom, in accordance with the 7th clause of the Treaty of Yandaboo, the Government is prepared to appoint.

"If these concessions shall be made, the British Government will agree as follows:—

"1. The Government of India will depute an officer of rank to proceed to Rangoon, in order to adjust the final settlement of the questions above mentioned, and to arrange the details for the reception of the Agent. The preliminaries having been settled by the subordinates of the chiefs, a meeting shall take place, and all differences shall be composed.

"2. On this settlement being completed, the ship belonging to the King of Ava, which has been seized by the squadron, shall be released.

"3. The blockade shall be removed, and entire concord shall be restored.

"If these demands shall be refused, the British Government will thereafter exact for itself the reparation which is due for the wrong it has suffered."

The reader will observe that not the slightest allusion is made to the complaint of the Governor of Rangoon respecting the seizure of the King's ship. On the contrary, it is assumed that the British are still the aggrieved parties, to whom reparation is due, notwithstanding the capture of that vessel, and the slaughter which accompanied its removal. I ask the reader again to suppose that a similar despatch, under

the like circumstances, had been received from America, would the complaint in such a case have passed unnoticed?

I give the answer of the Rangoon Governor in full. The letters of the Burmese authorities, translated into English, be it remembered, by a hostile pen, are remarkable for their terseness and clear common sense, and offer a striking contrast to the lengthy, rambling, and inconclusive reasoning which characterises the British part of the correspondence:—

"*The Governor of Rangoon to Mr. Halliday.*

"*Rangoon, February 2nd*, 1852.

"Mahamengla Mengkhomygyan (with titles), Governor of Rangoon, informs Mr. Frederick James Halliday, Secretary to the Government of India (with titles).

"With reference to the demand of an expression of deep regret for the circumstance of the deputation of officers sent by Commodore Lambert on the 6th of January last, being said to have been publicly treated with disrespect;

"With reference to the being willing immediately to make good the sum of 9,948 rupees, said to have been extorted from Captains Lewis and Sheppard by the former Governor of Rangoon;

"With reference to being willing to receive a Resident with all honour due to his rank and station, in conformity to the VIIth Article of the Treaty of Yandaboo;

"That, with reference to the above three points, if they are acceded to by the Governor of Rangoon, first, the ship belonging to the King of Ava, which has been seized, will be given back; secondly, the blockade now existing will be raised, and perfect concord restored.

"With reference to the above points contained in your letter, I, the Governor of Rangoon, taking them into my careful consideration, give the following reply:—

"On the 6th of January, 1852, Commodore Lambert, at midnight, took away the ship belonging to His Majesty the King of Ava.

On the following day I sent the Deputy-Governor of Rangoon to represent to Commodore Lambert that the act of taking his Majesty's ship by stealth, and unjustly, was in no wise in accordance with the acts proper to two great nations.

"Commodore Lambert stated in reply, that his reason for seizing the King's ship was because a deputation of subordinate officers sent by him had not been received.

"Commodore Lambert then wrote a letter to the Prime Ministers of Ava, as also transmitting one to myself, which were delivered to one of my subordinate officers. These letters were to the effect that he, Commodore Lambert, had seized the King's ship because the pecuniary claims under discussion had not been satisfied.

"What Commodore Lambert expressed, as above stated, both verbally and in writing, was not in conformity with the custom of great nations. This the Government of India are aware of; moreover, being aware of it, they have written a friendly letter, evincing their wish that the long-existing good understanding between the two nations should be renewed, and commerce and communication restored as they were before.

"Therefore, as soon as the officer which the Government of India is prepared to appoint, in conformity with existing treaties, shall arrive, a satisfactory and amicable arrangement can be made of the payment of the 9,948 rupees extorted from Captains Lewis and Sheppard; also with reference to the re-delivery of the King of Ava's ship, seized by Commodore Lambert.

"With reference to the question of the disrespect said to have been shown to the deputation sent with a letter by Commodore Lambert, it should be borne in mind that the English officers have been stating their own version of the case, and consequently, whilst shielding themselves, they have thrown all the blame on the other side."

Considering the sense of grievance felt by the writer, and which upon every principle of international law he was justified in feeling, remembering that not one syllable had been vouchsafed in explanation of the seizure of the King's ship, the above

must be regarded as a conciliatory, nay, a most submissive communication. *What would America have said under the same circumstances?*

No sooner did it reach the Governor-General of India than he (with the Burmese ship of war still in his power) resolved "to exact reparation by force of arms." Orders were given for fitting out an armed expedition, and he now proclaimed as his ultimatum that, in addition to a compliance with the preceding demands, the Burmese should be compelled, as the price of peace, "in consideration of the expenses of the expedition, and of compensation for property,"* to pay ten lacs of rupees, or one hundred thousand pounds.

The "Minute," or rather the "Extract" from Lord Dalhousie's Minute, professing to give reasons in justification of these hostile proceedings, extends over nearly five pages of the Parliamentary papers. In justice to his own reputation, its author ought to call for the unabridged publication of this "Minute." In the emasculation which it underwent at the Board of Control, it must surely have lost the essential qualities of the original. It has none of the dignity or force which properly belong to a State-paper. It dwells with a minuteness quite feminine upon details respecting points of ceremonial, and breaches of etiquette; but in arguing the main questions at issue, the "Minute," in its present form, must be pronounced an unstatesmanlike, immoral, and illogical production.

These are strong words, but their truth can unfortunately be proved by evidence as strong.

* P. 67.

The date of the Minute, is February 12th. Now let it be borne in mind, that up to this time there had been no ground for suspecting that the King of Ava had authorised the perpetration of any act of rudeness or injustice on the part of his servants at Rangoon towards the British officers, or that he had abandoned his intention, in the sincerity of which Lord Lansdowne, and the Governor-General of India, and Commodore Lambert themselves, had expressed their belief, of satisfying the just demands of the Indian Government. Lord Dalhousie knew that on the 7th January, the day after the rupture at Rangoon, Commodore Lambert had written to the Burmese Ministers at Ava, informing them of what had occurred, and concluding his letter with these words; "Any explanation the Court of Ava may wish to make on the subject, I shall be ready to forward to the Governor-General of India." A copy of this letter was in Lord Dalhousie's hands. He knew that an interval of thirty-five days was required for the receipt of an answer to a despatch sent to Ava, from Rangoon, and there was the additional time necessary for sending a steamer from Rangoon to Calcutta, which, with delays, could not fairly be calculated at less than another week, making together forty-two days. Now from January 7th, the date of Commodore Lambert's letter, to February 12th, the date of the "Minute," is just thirty-six days; so that this hostile expedition against the Burmese nation was resolved upon before sufficient time had been allowed to the King to offer the explanation which he had been invited to give. A letter from

the King was, as we shall by and by see, on its way, and actually reached the Governor-General's hands within a week of the date of his "Minute."

But the unstatesmanlike fault (to use the mildest term) of the "Minute," lies in this—that whereas the specific charges are directed against the Governor of Rangoon and him only, an assumption pervades the whole argument that the Burmese *Government* is the offending party:—hence the vague and confused phraseology which sometimes speaks of the "King," in some places of "Burmah," and in others, of the "Governor of Rangoon." But the sole object of the paper being to justify an armed expedition against a country with which we had a treaty of peace and commerce, it must be evident that the acts and conduct of the Imperial Government, and not of one of its local officers, could alone justify a resort to hostilities; provided always, that the Government did not assume the responsibility of the acts of its servants. What would Lord Dalhousie have said if the King of Ava had insisted upon treating with the Governor of Bombay instead of himself?

The "Minute" professes to give a very detailed recapitulation of all that had occurred at Rangoon. Entire pages are devoted to disquisitions upon controverted points of punctilio. The offence offered to the majesty and power of England, in keeping the deputation waiting in the sun "a full quarter of an hour," is discussed in all its bearings; *but there is not one syllable of allusion to the fact that Commodore Lambert had, in the teeth of instructions to the contrary, carried off a Burmese vessel of war, and done "great*

execution," among those who attempted to oppose him. Now, as this recapitulation of facts is intended to justify the despatch of a hostile expedition, to demand redress for certain injuries and insults, what must be said of the suppression of the one all-important fact, that we had already retaliated by force of arms, by seizing and carrying off ten times the amount of our pecuniary claim, and inflicting a hundred fold greater insult than that which had been offered to us,—thus, in fact, changing the relative position of the two parties, and placing the Burmese in the situation of appellants for reparation and justice? What shall we say when, after this *suppressio veri*, the Governor-General draws the following complacent deduction in favour of his "moderation and justice"*

* The following description of the "execution" at the Stockades, when the King's ship was carried off, is extracted from *The Second Burmese War;* a volume by Lieutenant Laurie, written at Rangoon. I give it as an illustration of the Governor-General's "moderation and forbearance."

"At length, the *Hermes* came in sight, rounding the point with the Burmese prize-vessel in tow. As she passed the Stockade, guns in rapid succession were opened on the vessels of war; at the same time, volleys of musketry were discharged upon them. The *Fox* immediately returned the enemy's fire by a terrific broadside; she likewise thundered forth against the war-boats which had ventured into the river. The *Hermes* then came up, and poured forth her shot and shell into the line of Stockade. The *Phlegethon* steamer, likewise, did vast destruction to the works. For nearly two hours were our vessels employed in spreading ruin and dismay around. During the conflict a large gun-boat, having on board a gun of considerable calibre, and upwards of sixty armed men, was sunk by a broadside, when nearly all on board perished. Altogether, about three hundred of the enemy were killed, and about the same number wounded, in this first

"The recital I have given in the preceding paragraphs of the course of recent events [*omitting the chief event*] will show that the original demand of the Government of India for redress was just and necessary; and that it was sought in a manner respectful to an independent nation. It will show that, a gross insult having been put upon this Government in the persons of its officers, *the Government has not been eager to take offence, or perverse in refusing amends. It has shown itself sincerely desirous to open a way to reconciliation; it has practised the utmost moderation and forbearance.*"*

The reader will hardly think that more need be said to justify my charge of immorality: and now for a specimen of the illogical character of the "Minute."

In alluding to the blockade which had been established by Commodore Lambert, the "Minute" seeks to justify that act by reference to the instructions he had received.

"The act of the Governor of Rangoon," says Lord Dalhousie, "in refusing admittance to the deputation, under the circumstances of insolence and contumely which I have described, and in withholding all amends for his conduct, was rightly viewed by the Commodore as a rejection of the demand he had been sent to make. *He at once established the blockade which had been enjoined as the consequence of such rejection.*"†

Here we have it laid down that the refusal of

encounter with the Burmese. As the vessels proceeded down to the next Stockade, they were again fired on, but only by musketry. It was remarked, at the conclusion of these operations, that the enemy probably had no intention of serious resistance, but felt themselves obliged to make some show of defence, when they saw the King's property taken off, as the heads of the leading men were at stake."—pp. 30–31.

* P. 66. † P. 65.

redress by the Governor of Rangoon was rightly considered as a justification of the hostile proceedings which followed. The following extract from the original instructions given to Commodore Lambert for his guidance, by the Governor-General, will show that the very opposite course was previously enjoined:—

"The refusal of the Governor of Rangoon," says Lord Dalhousie (October 31st), "to accede to a demand of reparation for a distinct breach of the treaty with Ava, *if it should be upheld by his Government*, would doubtless entitle the Government of India to proceed to exact reparation by force of arms, or to inflict such punishment on the Burmese State as circumstances might seem to require. *But the Government of India could not, with justice, proceed to such extremities, until it had communicated with the Court of Ava respecting the conduct of its servant, the Governor of Rangoon, and had thereby afforded it an opportunity of disavowing his acts, and of making the reparation which he had refused to concede.*"*

And on a subsequent occasion, on the receipt of the intelligence that Commodore Lambert, having determined to hold no communication with the first Governor of Rangoon, had sent a letter to that effect to the King of Ava, the Governor-General again enjoined that the blockade of the Burmese ports should be made contingent only upon his receiving an unfavourable answer from the King:—

"*If the King's reply should be unfavourable,*" says Lord Dalhousie (December 27th), "*the only course we can pursue* which would not, on the one hand, involve a dangerous submission to injury, or, on the other hand, precipitate us prematurely into a war which moderate counsels may still enable us with honour to avert, *will be to establish a blockade* of the two rivers at Rangoon and

* P. 13.

Moulmein, by which the great mass of the traffic of the Burmese empire is understood to pass."*

Nothing could be more clear or consistent with international law than these instructions for the guidance of the British commander; but no sooner does he set them aside, and begin hostilities in retaliation for the alleged acts of the Governor of Rangoon, than the Governor-General tries to justify him by an illogical deduction from his own previous despatch.—"He at once established the blockade which had been enjoined as the consequence of such rejection" (by the Governor of Rangoon) says Lord Dalhousie. There was, I repeat, no authority given to the Commodore to blockade the ports in retaliation for any act of the Governor of Rangoon,—*his instructions were precisely the reverse.*

I have before alluded to Colonel Bogle, who, at the time of the rupture at Rangoon, filled the post of Commissioner in the Tenasserim Provinces, bordering on the Burmese territory. His chief residence was on the Salween river, at the port of Moulmein, nearly opposite to, and a few miles distant from Martaban, one of the principal Burmese ports. The letters of this officer are almost the only part of the correspondence which an Englishman ought to read without blushing. In perusing his despatches, it is impossible not to detect, in spite of his official reserve, and the restraints which a sense of subordination imposed on him, that he had no sympathy for the violent proceedings which were being carried on in the neighbouring port of Rangoon, and that, if the affair had

* P. 32.

been left in his hands, it might have been amicably settled in a few hours. In style as well as matter, his letters present a striking contrast to many of the loose and desultory compositions which accompany them; and his conduct appears to have been characterised by an energy and a forbearance which bespeak at once a humane and yet resolute man.

At the commencement of the misunderstanding with the Burmese, Colonel Bogle was instructed by the Government at Calcutta to prepare against a sudden attack upon his Tenasserim frontiers.* But far from any hostile attempts having been made on his territory, the Burmese authorities seem to have shown the most nervous anxiety to avoid a collision. On the 30th January, 1852, Colonel Bogle informs the Government of India that two messengers had come over to him from Martaban, bringing a letter to say that a party of British police had attacked the Burmese village of Pagat, that the people had driven back the police; but being apprehensive that a more serious collision might take place, the Burmese authorities earnestly requested that measures might be taken to repress any aggressive disposition on the part of the British, and to preserve peace.

"It appearing to me," continues Colonel Bogle, "from the tone of the Burmese authorities, that the intelligence they had sent was true, and that they were actuated by a very friendly feeling, and not having received any report of the matter from any other source, I thought that the best way of settling the affair was to get into a steamer, and proceed to

* P. 15.

the spot at once." In proceeding up the river, "*the steamer*," (continues Colonel Bogle) "*took the ground close to the Martaban fortification, and remained fast for twenty minutes, within short musket-shot of the walls. The place was well filled with men, and I observed a couple of guns mounted on the ramparts; but no advantage was taken of the steamer being aground;* and we remained unmolested until the tide rose, and the *Phlegethon* proceeded on her voyage."* Let the reader bear in mind that this incident, illustrating so strongly the pacific disposition of the Burmese, occurred three weeks after Commodore Lambert had seized the King's ship, and declared the whole coast of Burmah in a state of blockade, *and whilst Martaban itself was actually blockaded by a couple of gunboats*:—

"Nor did the Burmese," continues Colonel Bogle, "appear to entertain any fears that we would annoy them; the wharf near their large pagoda, and their walls, on which, when passing a fortnight before, I did not see a single soul, were now crowded with men sitting quietly looking at us; the red flag—emblem of war—was flying arrogantly enough at many points all along the line; but women were also to be seen seated along the bank, which indicated perfect confidence that the steamer had not suddenly appeared within pistol-shot of the place with the intention of harassing any one."†

The next day at noon, the steamer reached Pagat, her place of destination, when, to the astonishment of Colonel Bogle, the first person that put off in a boat, was the identical Martaban official, who had the day before brought the letter, respecting the collision at Pagat, over to Moulmein. I cannot better describe

* P. 60. † P. 60.

what followed than in Colonel Bogle's own clear and concise language:—

"From him I learnt that during the night he had been dispatched by the Governor of Martaban to summon the chief of Pagat to his presence, and to take every possible measure to prevent hostilities; and he assured me that, having pulled all night, he had arrived that morning, and had, in conformity with his instructions, dispatched the chief to Martaban, and caused it to be intimated to all the inhabitants of Pagat and the neighbourhood, that they were to conduct themselves in the most peaceful manner possible, and to do nothing that could be offensive to the English authorities; and he begged that the people on the British side might receive similar orders.

"He was immediately assured that I had no other desire than that all should remain quiet and peaceful, and, as a proof of my reluctance to avail myself of the power at my command, I directed all the boats which had been taken from Pagat, to be cast adrift from the stern of the *Phlegethon*, and restored to the Burmese, at the same time administering a stern warning to the recipients, that if the people of Pagat, who are notorious robbers, put a foot on the British side of the river, under the present state of affairs, they might chance to receive a less agreeable visit from the steamer, at whose crew and armament they gazed with considerable interest.

"Having settled this matter to the entire satisfaction of the Burmese functionary, *and received his earnest protestations of a desire to remain at peace*, I visited several of our police ports and villages, where Lieutenant Hopkinson issued such orders as seemed proper; we then returned towards Moulmein, but *again got aground under the walls of Martaban, and remained six hours hard and fast, within pistol-range of the shore;* during the time (it was night) we could distinctly see crowds of Burmese around their watch-fires, but except just when the steam was blowing off with the remarkable noise which it always makes, they took no notice of us.

"Now, coupling all the circumstances of this trip with the recent communications from the Governors of Rangoon and

Martaban, noticed in my letter of the 27th instant, it appears to me probable that the pacific tone assumed by the Burmese is in consequence of orders from the Governor of Rangoon, to whom Martaban is now subordinate, or it may be dictated by weakness, and a backward state of preparation."*

Remembering that at the moment when this despatch was penned at Moulmein, Commodore Lambert was actually engaged in hostilities with the Burmese at Rangoon, (seventy miles distant) that he, the accredited representative of British power in Burmah, was forwarding to the Government of India accusations against the Burmese of the most hostile designs—bearing these circumstances in mind, it is apparent how strong must have been the sense of justice which prompted Colonel Bogle, even at the risk of being charged with travelling out of his province, to bring to the knowledge of the Governor-General of India the above facts, showing the pacific disposition of the Burmese authorities. This feeling was still more strongly evinced in the events which followed.

On the 7th February two Burmese officials, called *Tseetkays*, with "gold umbrellas," crossed over from Martaban to Moulmein, with a letter from the King of Ava to the Governor-General of India, which had just arrived in eleven days direct from the capital, with a request from the Governor of Martaban that Colonel Bogle would transmit it to Calcutta. After delivering the letter, inclosed in an ivory case and a red velvet cover, with all proper ceremony, "they entered into some discussion on the present state of

* P. 61.

affairs, and expressed the great anxiety of their government that the existing differences should be amicably arranged, and the Treaty of Yandaboo maintained."*

In perusing the following account of what passed at this interview, as given in the despatch of Colonel Bogle, it will be well to bear in mind the delicate position in which he was placed. The letter from the Government at Ava to the Governor-General of India was written in reply to the despatch sent by Commodore Lambert, from Rangoon, on the 7th January, apprising them for the first time of the rupture which had occurred the day before, and offering to be the medium for transmitting any explanation or answer from the Court of Ava to the Government of India. The ministers of the "Golden Foot," feeling puzzled on learning that Commodore Lambert, instead of, as they had supposed, being on his way back to Calcutta, with the friendly answer to the Governor-General's letter, was blockading Rangoon, and holding possession of the King's ship, they determined naturally enough to forward their next letter through Colonel Bogle. The latter, although he was evidently too conscientious to conceal his conviction of the pacific disposition of the Burmese, yet felt bound by a sense of official duty to avoid the appearance of favouring the cause of those who were regarded at that moment as in a state of actual hostility against the government under which he served; and hence in the following account of

* P. 68.

the interview, an admonitory rebuke of the *Tseetkays*, and a vindication of the authority of Commodore Lambert fall from him, which, however, whilst leaving his own opinion as apparent as ever, serves only to bring out more strongly the repugnance of the Burmese to enter into further relations with that officer:—

"They were most particularly desirous," says Colonel Bogle, "that further negotiations should not be conducted through Rangoon; and that I would do all in my power to procure a reply from the Governor-General, and transmit it through Martaban; in reply to which I told them that I could do nothing more than send on the King's letter; that if an answer came to me I would, of course, forward it to Martaban with all dispatch; but that I thought it more probable it would be sent through Commodore Lambert and the shorter route of Rangoon; and that I had no control whatever in a matter of the kind. They did not seem at all pleased at this, but at once suggested that I might at least enable them to communicate direct with the Indian Government, by sending the Principal Assistant Commissioner (Lieutenant Hopkinson) with them to Calcutta, in which case they were prepared to do without negotiators, and go and deliver the letter themselves. Of course I declined to depute my Assistant with them, but offered them a passage in the steamer.

"They expressed great regret that affairs had not been settled peaceably at Rangoon, and that the King's ship had been taken; but I clearly pointed out to them that I had no power to enter upon the discussion of matters connected with that place; and explained to them that, if there was any sincerity in their professions of a desire for peace, they should shape their conduct more in accordance with them; and that if their Government really desired a settlement of differences, it should lose no time in forwarding proper persons with sufficient powers to Commodore Lambert, with whom alone negotiations could be carried on.

"To this the *Tseetkays* expressed some dislike, and strongly

dwelt upon the circumstance that, everything having taken an unsatisfactory turn at Rangoon, it would be much better to forget all that had occurred there, and to begin the negotiations at the beginning again. I took some pains to have it clearly explained to them that I had no power to do more than simply forward the King's letter; but that, as regarded all negotiations, the duty of conducting them had been assigned to Commodore Lambert, and it was to him that their Government must address itself; but the more I dwelt upon the propriety of following this course of proceeding, the more they urged the expediency of setting aside all that had already occurred, and beginning anew.

"The circumstance of the King of Burmah having sent a letter to the Governor-General at all, and with such haste, is remarkable; and that he should have chosen this route, probably under the supposition that, with a blockade established, there might be difficulties on the Rangoon side, would indicate much anxiety to obtain an early reply; and, from what the *Tseetkays* said, there is no doubt that the answer will be looked for with great impatience. I may as well mention that on my alluding to the stoppage of trade and intercourse as one of the evils that had already overtaken them, consequent on the acts of their rulers, the *Tseetkays* expressed the most perfect indifference to that, and treated it as a matter of no moment whatever."*

Colonel Bogle forwarded immediately the letter to Commodore Lambert at Rangoon, with a request that it might be dispatched by a steamer to Calcutta. "The circumstance," says he, in his letter to the Commodore, "of the Burmese Government having sent a letter to the Governor-General at all, and the speed with which it has come, would certainly indicate a desire that hostilities may be averted, at least for the present; and the very convenient opportunity which this letter will afford the Indian Government of categorically detailing its demands and intentions,

* P. 68.

induces me to attach more importance to it than it would otherwise, perhaps, deserve."*

The King's letter was written to bring to the knowledge of the Governor-General the events which had occurred at Rangoon, and with which the reader is already familiar. Considering that the seat of government is nearly five hundred miles from the sea-coast, and that the means of obtaining correct intelligence are very inferior to those in countries where the publicity of the press checks the reports of local functionaries, the occurrences seem to have been known with remarkable accuracy by the Burmese Ministry. This may probably be attributed to the high rank of the Commissioners deputed to meet Commodore Lambert, who, we now learn for the first time, were "the Perpetual Privy Councillor, Mahameng Gyam, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Menggyee Mengteng Raza."† After narrating the occurrences which led to the rupture at Rangoon, and the seizure of the King's ship by Commodore Lambert, the Burmese Ministers conclude with the following very natural inquiry:—

"This communication is now made with the view of eliciting, in reply, the intentions of the English Government; and it cannot be determined whether it has deputed Commodore Lambert simply to dispose of the question relating to the merchants, or whether he has been sent to begin by an attack; which should have the effect of bringing on hostilities between the two countries."‡

Before this letter reached Calcutta, Lord Dalhousie had, as we have seen, determined upon dispatching

* P. 72. † P. 69. ‡ P. 70.

an armament to the coast of Burmah, and had written his long "Minute," containing the reasons for the course he was about to take.

His Lordship's reply to the King of Ava's communication contains merely a repetition of the arguments in the "Minute;"—there is, again, the same uncandid evasion of the real question at issue, the seizure of the King's ship,—and once more we have a lengthened dissertation upon the breach of etiquette on the occasion of the visit of the deputation to the Governor's palace. Upon this latter point the Governor-General is really unfashionable; for he denies to the Governor of Rangoon the privilege which every body in "good society" in London, if not in Calcutta, exercises every day. To be able to answer "not at home" with a good grace is one of the qualifications for the hall-porter of a lady patroness of Almack's; but who ever heard of such an answer being made a *casus belli* between Carlton. Terrace and Belgrave Square, or even the ground for an exchange of "Minutes," or anything more warlike than a few visiting cards? The Governor-General has admitted that the informal visit attempted by the officers composing the deputation might have given a plausible pretext to the Governor of Rangoon for declining to receive them,* but he complains of the mode in which it was done. Now I humbly submit that no course less insulting could possibly have been adopted. Mr. Crawfurd, in the interesting account of his mission to Ava, informs us that, owing to the great heat of the

* P. 65.

weather, all classes in Burmah, from the King to the meanest peasant, suspend their labours and seek repose in the middle of the day. To call upon a person of rank at noon on business, without a previous arrangement, is as much an act of *mauvais ton* as if a Burmese deputation (and I think they would do wisely to send one) were to come to England to see the President of the Board of Control, and insist on an interview at nine o'clock in the evening, when he was at dinner. In such a case he would be "not at home." Whether the answer were "not at home," or "asleep," it would be deprived of all offensiveness if it were in harmony with the custom of the country. In making use of the excuse which the hour of the day afforded him, the Governor of Rangoon showed a well-bred desire to avoid offering an affront to his ill-timed visitors.

One feels painfully affected, almost to humiliation, at reading page after page of such disquisitions as the following, from the pen of a Governor-General of India, in State papers, upon every sentence of which hangs the solemn question of peace or war:—

"When Commodore Lambert," says Lord Dalhousie to the King of Ava, "on the arrival of the new Governor, proposed to renew negotiations relative to the merchants who had been oppressed, the Governor intimated his readiness to receive, at any time, a communication from Commodore Lambert upon the subject. On the following day, a letter written on behalf of the British Government, was addressed by the Commodore to the Governor of Rangoon. Although the present Governor and his predecessor had not observed the respect which was due, nor the custom of their own country, and had sent their letters by the hands of men of no rank or consideration whatever, yet these

persons were not rejected by the Commodore. And when he despatched his letter to the Governor of Rangoon, it was sent, not by the hands of any such inconsiderable persons, but by the officer next in rank to himself, accompanied by officers of the army and of the fleet.

"Yet the Governor of Rangoon presumed to refuse all admittance to these officers, bearing a letter to him on the part of the British Government.

"He not only presumed to refuse to them admittance, but he offered to them insults and indignity. The Deputy Governor did not approach them, as your servants have falsely reported to your Majesty. No officer was deputed to them. They were approached only by the lowest; they were compelled to remain beyond the door; and were publicly subjected to disrespect and insolence, such as would have been regarded as ignominious by the meanest subordinate in your servant's Durbar."*

The answer to this is, that the Governor's visitors were informed by his servants that he was "asleep," which, between gentlemen in Burmah, was sufficient to avoid unpleasant consequences; and between men of sense and masculine character, whether Burmese or British, who did not want to quarrel, it might have sufficed as an excuse for both parties to keep the peace.

The letter of the Governor-General, after announcing to His Majesty the formidable preparations that were going on, to "enforce his rights and vindicate his power,"—preparations which, he added, would not be suspended in consequence of the receipt of the King's letter, concludes with the following ultimatum:—

"1. Your Majesty, disavowing the acts of the present Governor

* P. 74.

of Rangoon, shall, by the hands of your Ministers, express regret that Captain Fishbourne, and the British officers who accompanied him, were exposed to insult at the hands of your servants at Rangoon, on the 6th of January last.

"2. In satisfaction of the claims of the two captains who suffered exactions from the late Governor of Rangoon: in compensation for the loss of property which British merchants may have suffered in the burning of that city by the acts of the present Governor; and in consideration of the expenses of preparation for war, your Majesty will agree to pay, and will pay at once, ten lacs of rupees (one hundred thousand pounds) to the Government of India.

"3. Your Majesty will direct that an accredited Agent, to be appointed in conformity with the VIIth Article of the Treaty of Yandaboo, and to reside at Rangoon, shall be received by your Majesty's servants there; and shall, at all times, be treated with the respect due to the Representative of the British Government.

"4. Your Majesty will direct the removal of the present Governor of Rangoon, whose conduct renders it impossible that the Government of India should consent to any official intercourse with him.

"If, *without further delay, negotiation, or correspondence,* these conditions shall be consented to, and shall be fulfilled on, or before, the 1st day of April next, hostile operations shall be stayed, peace between the States shall be renewed, and the King's ship shall be restored.

"But if—untaught by former experience; forgetful of the irresistible power of the British arms in India; and heedless of the many additional proofs that have been given of its might, in the successful fall of the powerful Sovereigns of Bhurtpore, of Scinde, of the Sikhs, and of many other Princes, since last the Burman Rulers vainly attempted to resist the British troops in war—the King of Ava shall unwisely refuse the *just and lenient conditions* which are now set before him, the British Government will have no alternative but immediate war.

"The guilt and the consequences of war will rest upon the head of the Ruler of Ava."

Let it be borne in mind that up to this moment the King had been charged with no unfriendly act towards the British Government. His former letter, and the disgrace of the Governor of Rangoon, inflicted at our instance, had elicited the approbation of the Government of India, and of the British Ministry. Nay, in the very letter before us, the following tribute is paid to the "justice and sagacity" of the King:—

"The reply which your Majesty addressed to the letter from the Government of India was, in all respects, worthy of a just and sagacious Ruler. It admitted the justice of the claims which had been advanced, directed the removal of the Governor of Rangoon, and promised redress by the hands of a new Governor fully armed with powers to afford it.

"That redress has not been granted by your Majesty's servant at Rangoon; on the contrary, gross and repeated insults have since been offered by him to the British Government, in the person of its officers, and every amende has been evaded or refused."*

Let it also be borne in mind that, in retaliation for the insult alleged to have been offered by His Majesty's servant at Rangoon, we had already carried off the royal ship, and that the above ultimatum was the reply to an inquiry from the King, as to the authority of Commodore Lambert to commit that act of violence, but to which inquiry no answer was given:—bearing all this in mind, there could be but one result expected or intended from this high-handed appeal to force against the claims of reason and justice. The Governor-General's ultimatum was forwarded to Colonel Bogle at Moulmein; the same

* P. 74.

"*Tseetkays*" crossed over from Martaban to receive the despatch; they "appeared to be much grieved"* at its purport; it was at once forwarded to the capital, but no answer was returned.

It is no part of my plan to give any account of the war which followed; respecting which some particulars will be found in the "Further papers relating to hostilities with Burmah," presented to Parliament during the present session. A war it can hardly be called. A rout, a massacre, or a visitation, would be a more appropriate term. A fleet of war-steamers and other vessels took up their position in the river, and on the 11th April, 1852, *being Easter Sunday*, they commenced operations by bombarding both the Rangoon and Dallah shores. Everything yielded like toy-work beneath the terrible broadsides of our ships. The Burmese had about as fair a chance of success in contending against our steamers, rockets, detonating shells, and heavy ordnance, of which they were destitute, as one of their Pegu ponies would have had in running a race with a locomotive. Whole armies were put to the rout, with scarcely the loss of a man on our side; and fortified places, when scaled by a few sailors or marines, were found entirely abandoned. There is neither honour nor glory to be gained when a highly civilized nation arrays the powers of mechanical and chemical science against a comparatively feeble, because ignorant and barbarous people. There is small room for the display of courage where there is little risk; and even muscular

* P. 80.

force has not much to do with a combat, the result of which depends almost entirely on the labours and discoveries of the workshop and laboratory. There is no doubt then as to the result of the Burmese war. Our troops may suffer from the climate, the water, or provisions; but the enemy has no power to prevent their subduing and annexing the whole or any part of the country. *But success however complete will not obliterate one fact respecting the origin of the war.*

God can alone know the motives of man. But, looking back upon the acts of Commodore Lambert, I must say that, had his object in visiting Rangoon been to provoke hostilities, his conduct, in first precipitating a quarrel, and then committing an act of violence certain to lead to a deadly collision, could not have been more ingeniously framed to promote that object.

It has been urged in vindication of Lord Dalhousie's part in these proceedings, that, owing to the anomalous relations which exist between the Royal Navy and the Government of India, he had no power to compel Commodore Lambert to obey his orders.* This is true, and is illustrative of the absurdity of the double government of India. But this should have induced Lord Dalhousie in the first place to have selected another envoy. India has a navy of

* This subject was referred to in the House of Lords, and the "anomaly" pointed out by Lords Ellenborough and Broughton, the latter of whom stated that, before leaving the Board of Control, he had received a letter from Lord Dalhousie, expressing a hope that it would be remedied under the new Charter Act.—(*See Hansard, March* 25th, 1852.)

its own. But where was the necessity for sending a squadron at all, until after a demand for redress had been made through a civilian, or at least a Company's officer, who, like Colonel Bogle, understood the customs of the country; and the more especially so, as it was the first complaint that had been officially presented to the Government of Burmah? Besides, it was in the power of his Lordship, after the first proofs of Commodore Lambert's rashness, to have withdrawn the instructions with which he sailed from Calcutta. Instead of which, not content with silently acquiescing in the proceedings of the Commodore, he adopted and justified his acts, with the full knowledge that he thereby shared his responsibility.

But there are other and very serious aspects to this business. Commodore Lambert, whilst owning no allegiance to the Government of India, made war upon the Burmese with the Queen's ships without having had any orders from the British Admiralty to enter upon hostilities, and the question naturally arises—to what superior authority was he responsible for the discreet fulfilment of the task he had undertaken? Why, in a strictly professional sense, to nobody. Acting under no instructions from the Admiralty, and standing towards the Government of India "in the position of the commander of an allied force,"* he was virtually irresponsible for the proper performance of the special duty which he had volunteered upon. It must be admitted that a state of things more ingeniously contrived to enable us to

*Lord Ellenborough, House of Lords, 25th March, 1852.

involve ourselves in wars, without the unpleasantness of feeling accountable for the consequences, could hardly be imagined.

But the "anomaly" does not end here. The most important point remains to be noticed. These wars, got up by a Queen's officer in the teeth of instructions to the contrary from the Governor-General of India, whose orders he is no more bound to obey than those of the Emperor of China, *are carried on at the expense of the people of India.* Hence the difficulty of rousing the attention of the English public to the subject. We have an army of twenty thousand men now in Burmah, who have seized a territory as large as England, and their proceedings have attracted less notice from the press and public of this kingdom than has the entry of a few thousand Russian troops into the, to us, far more inaccessible Danubian Provinces. And the reason is obvious. The *bill* for the cost of the Burmese war is presented not to us, but to the unhappy ryots of Hindostan. To aggravate this injustice in the present case, it must be remembered that the war originated in a dispute between the Governor of Rangoon and the captains of a couple of English merchant ships. What exclusive interest had the half-naked peasant of Bengal in the settlement of the claims of Captains Sheppard and Lewis, that he should alone be made to bear the expense of the war which grew out of them? And not merely the cost of the war, heavy as it will be, but the far more serious burden to be entailed upon our older possessions in India, from the permanent occupation or annexation of the whole or a large part

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of the Burmese empire. To the latter evil, growing out of our insatiable love of territorial aggrandisement, we shall probably be wilfully blind, until awakened from a great national illusion by some rude shock to the fabric of our Indian finance.

It is now placed beyond a doubt, for we have it on the evidence of the East India Company themselves, that our recent acquisitions of territory in the East have been unproductive. Scinde, Sattara, and the Punjaub, which have been annexed at the cost of so many crimes, are one and all entailing a charge upon the Indian revenue. Yet these countries are, as it were, within the basin of Hindostan, and lie contiguous to our possessions. But Burmah is no *part* of Hindostan. The people are semi-Chinese; and, as a proof how little intercourse we have had with them, it may be mentioned that, when Lord Dalhousie wished to print some proclamations to be distributed in Pegu, it was found that there was no press in Calcutta where the Burmese character could be printed. The distance from Calcutta to Rangoon by sea is as great as from London to Hamburgh; and it must be borne in mind that troops in Burmah will be entitled to extra pay for being stationed "beyond sea," which will add much to the expense of its occupation.

But I need not press this view of the subject; for it is avowed on all hands that the acquisition of territory in Burmah is not desirable: and Lord Dalhousie recorded in express terms, at the outset of the contest, his opinion that "conquest in Burmah would be a calamity second only to the calamity of

war."* And when contemplating the possibility of being obliged to extend his military occupation even to the capital, he says that, in such a contingency, "the Government of India can no longer regard its financial position with the confidence it is now warranted in entertaining," and that, instead of surplus revenue, we must in that case expect to hear of "exhausted cash balances, and re-opened loans."†

Yet it is not a little perplexing to find, in the teeth of all these solemn disavowals of a desire for seizing more territory, that the Governor-General's policy aims directly at the annexation of Pegu, and will admit of no other terms; and if "a real necessity for advance" should arise, then, in spite of its ruinous consequences, "let us," says his Lordship, "fulfil our destiny, which there, as elsewhere, will have compelled us forward in spite of our wishes:"‡ or, in plain English, let us take the whole of Burmah, even if it should prove ruinous to our finances, because it is our destiny.

Now, if we are to have credit for the sincerity of all this, what will be said of its statesmanship? I put aside the pretence of "destiny," which is not to be tolerated as a plea amongst Christians, however valid it may be in Mahometan casuistry. But where lies the necessity for annexing any part of Burmah, if it be not our interest to do so? I find but one argument put forth, but it is repeated in a variety of forms. We are told that if we do not seize a portion of the enemy's territory we shall be disparaged in his

* Further papers, p. 44. † Ibid. p. 87. ‡ Ibid. p. 93.

eyes. In other words, unless the Government of India, with three hundred thousand troops, and backed by the whole power of the British empire, pursue a policy injurious to its own interests, it will suffer in the estimation of the Burmese, who, we are told, have in the present war "betrayed a total want of enterprise, courage, power, and resource; large bodies of them retiring at the mere sight of a steamer, or in the presence of a few Europeans as soon as they are landed."* Admitting, I repeat, the sincerity of this argument, what shall we say of the policy which it seeks to justify? Lord Dalhousie begins with a claim on the Burmese for less than a thousand pounds; which is followed by the additional demand of an apology from the Governor of Rangoon for the insult offered to our officers; next, his terms are raised to one hundred thousand pounds, and an apology from the King's ministers; then follows the invasion of the Burmese territory; when, suddenly, all demands for pecuniary compensation and apologies cease, and his Lordship is willing to accept the cession of Pegu as a "compensation" and "reparation" for the past, whilst at the same time he pens long minutes to prove how calamitous it will be to us to annex that province to our Indian empire! Conceding, I say, the *bonâ fides* of all this—ought not we to advertise in the *Times*, for a Governor-General of India who can collect a debt of a thousand pounds without annexing a territory which will be ruinous to our finances?

But the fact is, and the sooner we all know it the

* P. 65.

better, nobody gives us credit for sincerity when we protest our reluctance to acquire more territory, whilst our actions are thus falsifying all our professions.* Nor, speaking nationally, are we entitled to such credit.

Public opinion in this country has not hitherto

* That the reader may see how a policy which we declare to be unprofitable to ourselves, in a pecuniary sense, weakens our moral influence in the eyes of other nations, I give the following extract from a speech delivered by General Cass in the Senate of the United States, December, 1852.

"Another of the native Powers of Hindostan has fallen before the march of a great commercial corporation, and its 8,000,000 or 10,000,000 of people have gone to swell the immense congregation of British subjects in India. And what do you think was the cause of the war which has just ended in the swallowing up of the kingdom of Burmah? The whole history of human contests, since the dispersing of the family of man upon the plains of Shinar, exhibits no such national provocation, followed by such national punishment. Political arithmetic contains no such sum as that which drove England to this unwelcome measure. Had we not the most irrefragable evidence, we might well refuse credence to this story of real rapacity. But the fact is indisputable that England went to war with Burmah, and annihilated its political existence, for the non-payment of a disputed demand of £990. So says the London *Times*, the authoritative expositor of the opinions and policy of England. 'To appreciate,' says that impersonation of British feeling, 'correctly the character of this compulsory bargain, the reader must recollect that the sum originally demanded of the Burmese for the indemnification of our injured merchants was £990., and Lord Dalhousie's terms, even when the guns of our steamers were pointed against Rangoon, comprehended, in consideration of the expenses of the expedition and of compensation for property, a claim only of £100,000.' *Well does it become such a people to preach homilies to other nations upon disinterestedness and moderation.*"

been opposed to an extension of our dominion in the East. On the contrary, it is believed to be profitable to the nation, and all classes are ready to hail with approbation every fresh acquisition of territory, and to reward those conquerors who bring us home title-deeds, no matter, I fear, how obtained, to new Colonial possessions. So long as they are believed to be profitable, this spirit will prevail.

But it is not consistent with the supremacy of that moral law which mysteriously sways the fate of empires, as well as of individuals, that deeds of violence, fraud, and injustice, should be committed with permanent profit and advantage. If wrongs are perpetrated in the name, and by the authority, of this great country, by its proconsuls or naval commanders in distant quarters of the globe, it is not by throwing the flimsy veil of a "double government" over such transactions that we shall ultimately escape the penalty attaching to deeds for which we are really responsible. How, or when, the retribution will react upon us, I presume not to say. The rapine in Mexico and Peru was retaliated upon Spain in the ruin of her finances. In France, the *razzias* of Algeria were repaid by her own troops, in the massacres of the Boulevards, and the savage combats in the streets of Paris. Let us hope that the national conscience, which has before averted from England, by timely atonement and reparation, the punishment due for imperial crimes, will be roused ere it be too late from its lethargy, and put an end to the deeds of violence and injustice which have marked every step of our progress in India.

WHAT NEXT—AND NEXT?

NOTE.

FROM the outset Mr. Cobden opposed the Russian war. The principles upon which he acted are set forth in his earliest political writings, and having once laid hold of what he believed to be a true doctrine, he allowed no consideration of self-interest or popularity to interfere with the just and faithful application of that doctrine to the existing state of public affairs. At this lapse of time it seems incredible that his resistance to a war which is now generally regarded as having been a colossal blunder, should have subjected him to so much odium and misrepresentation. The more reflecting portion of their fellow countrymen — even those who widely differed from their views—have since admitted that no public men ever exhibited a higher degree of moral courage than did Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright during those eventful years. From the moment the first danger of hostilities arose their labours in the cause of peace were unceasing, both in and out of Parliament. Amid the storm of obloquy with which they were assailed, they stood resolute and unmoved—serene in the strength which the fulfilment of a supreme duty always imparts to the upright statesman. Mr. Cobden did not believe in war as a means of promoting the interests of commerce, or of effecting the regeneration of nations. After the Exhibition of 1851, he proposed that the profits should be devoted

to the construction of an Atlantic telegraph; and a favourite sentiment of his was that "Free trade was the international law of the Almighty."

"What next—and next?" has passed into the vocabulary of political phrases. The pamphlet itself was published in the early part of January 1856, about the time that Austria, supported by the influence of the Emperor Napoleon, was making to the Cabinet of St. Petersburgh those proposals of peace which soon after resulted in the Conference at Paris, and the termination of the Crimean war. While the destinies of Eastern Europe were still committed to the arbitrament of the battle-field, Mr. Cobden forwarded to a veteran Whig statesman a letter of Charles James Fox, which, exulting as it did at the peace of Amiens, contrasted strangely with the warlike manifestoes of the successors of that illustrious leader of the liberal party. When peace was proclaimed in 1856, Mr. Cobden, if he had been asked the question, could well have answered in the language of Mr. Fox, whose letter, which accidentally came into his possession, he turned to such good account:—"I am "very glad indeed that peace has come at last, and "you are quite right in supposing that, whatever "the terms may be, it is sure of my approbation."

WHAT NEXT—AND NEXT?

In the following remarks, all allusion to the original cause of the rupture with Russia has been studiously avoided, and I therefore venture to hope that the most strenuous supporters of the war, and the most ardent advocate of peace, may meet me on common ground to discuss the probabilities of the future—a question in which all parties are alike interested.

If any argument were required to show the necessity we are under of entering upon this prospective discussion, it will only be necessary to glance at the circumstances which attended the expedition to the Crimea. That that undertaking was a leap in the dark,—that ministers, generals, admirals, and ambassadors, were all equally ignorant of the strength of the fortress and the numbers of the enemy they were going to encounter, is proved by the evidence before the Sebastopol Committee. We are there told that Lord Raglan could obtain no information; that Sir John Burgoyne believed that none of the authorities with the British army when it landed had any knowledge of the subject; and that Admiral Dundas could get no intelligence from the Greeks who were hostile, and the "Turks knew nothing." Our authorities guessed the number of the Russian forces in

the Crimea variously at from 30,000 to 120,000 men. In this state of ignorance, Lord Raglan, under a mild protest which threw the responsibility on the Government at home, set sail from Varna for the invasion of Russia. Yet, whilst confessedly without one fact on which to found an opinion, the most confident expectations were formed of the result. Lord Aberdeen and Mr. Sidney Herbert state that it was the general belief that Sebastopol would fall by a *coup de main*. Sir John Burgoyne was in hopes we should have taken it "at once," until he saw it, and then he "altered his opinion." And according to Admiral Dundas "two-thirds of the people expected to be in Sebastopol in two or three days."

We are at the end of the second year's campaign; the Allies have lost, in killed and wounded, nearly as many men as it cost Napoleon, in actual combat, to gain possession of Moscow, and still Sebastopol is not wholly in our power.

And what good grounds have we for believing that the Government, and the military and naval authorities, have better information or more wisely arranged plans for the future than they had for the past? Will it not at least be prudent to assume that what happened a year since may occur again, and to recognise the duty of every man to bring to the common stock of knowledge whatever facts or opinions he may possess, calculated to shed a ray of light upon the path of triumph or disaster along which both friends and opponents of the war must accompany our national fortunes?

Within an area of about forty miles square upon

the extreme southern point of the Crimea, more than 300,000 men are waiting the return of spring, to start into life and hostile action:—what will be their first operations? Assuming, as is now probable, though their motives are not very intelligible, that the Russians will not evacuate the peninsula without a further struggle, the Allies will, it may be expected, open the campaign by attacking them in their strongly intrenched position, chosen no doubt with judgment, and fortified during the winter with the utmost labour and skill. Let us assume the most favourable result—more fortunate than that predicted by the writers in the United Service Magazine—that, after a series of obstinate and bloody encounters, the Russians are compelled to retreat, and leave the whole of the Crimea in the hands of the Allies—

What Next?

Will the Allied powers keep possession of the Crimea? If so, an army will be required to occupy it. Or, is it to be abandoned? If so, in twelve hours the Cossack lances will be seen above the ruins of Sebastopol; and then what was the motive for taking it at so great a cost? In either case, what other operations are to be carried on? If, in addition to the retention of the Crimea, the war is to be prosecuted in Bessarabia, or on the Dnieper and the Boug, another army will be required for those operations, to supply the place of that left in the Crimea, and to fill up the vacuum occasioned by our losses in the expulsion of the Russians.

But another plan is proposed. It has been said,

as soon as you have cleared the Crimea of the enemy, withdraw your army, and convert the war into a naval blockade. But will the Russian armies, no longer menaced by the Allies, remain inactive? Russia is at war with Turkey. What in that case is to prevent her from pouring reinforcements, either by the pass of Dariel, or by her great highway the Wolga, and across the Caspian, which our ships cannot reach, into Georgia, and thus indemnifying herself, as Mr. Layard has predicted she will do, for the loss of the Crimea, by fresh conquests in Asia Minor? No; the war entered into by France and England must be carried on without intermission, until peace is concluded between Russia and Turkey.

We may conclude then that the further operations already indicated by the capture of Kinburn will be carried out; that after the conquest of the Crimea the Allied armies proceed to attack Nicolaieff, and, notwithstanding the difficulties of approach, and the obstacles which the genius of Todtleben may have created, I will again give them credit for greater success than is promised by the organ of the United Services, by assuming the capture of that arsenal. The war will still go on; Perekop will be invested; the forts of the Danube attacked; an army will be landed to occupy Odessa; (I will not assume the infamy of a bombardment of that *entrepôt.*) – I will take for granted that all these operations are successful, and that every place within fifty miles of the Black Sea in Southern Russia is in the hands of the Allies; an army may then be dispatched to Tiflis, to drive the Russians from Georgia, and their Trans-

caucasian provinces. That all these objects may be accomplished with time and commensurate efforts—efforts of which the past are but a faint example—by two such nations as France and England, I have never denied; that repeated levies of men and money will be necessary for their accomplishment, no one will dispute: and having assumed all these achievements to be effected in a succession of victorious campaigns, having thus realised the wildest hopes of the most sanguine advocates of war—

And then What Next?

"Russia must then come to terms," will be the popular answer. What terms? We know the terms that were offered and refused by her at Vienna, but who can say what we are now fighting for? One party insists on a solid guarantee from Russia for the future, without specifying its nature; another would wrest from her Poland and Circassia; a third will be content with the Crimea; and there are others who insist on a heavy fine to prevent future acts of aggression. But it may at least be assumed that they who advocated the continuance of the war, at the close of the Vienna Conferences, will exact as hard terms after so great an additional sacrifice of blood and treasure as before. These, however, Russia rejects, on the plea that they involve an abdication of her sovereign rights in her own territory, and she declares her determination to resist the attempted humiliation to the last extremity. The question then, is, whether the Allies have the power of imposing these terms by force of arms?

There are several ways by which nations are brought to abject conditions of peace, such as the capturing or destroying their only army, the occupation of their metropolis, or the cutting off its supply of food, and the blockading of their ports. Napoleon's favourite plan was to seize the enemy's capital, and so paralyze the action of their government. Thus, in breaking up his camp at Boulogne, to confront the hostile attitude of Austria, he made every manœuvre subservient to the capture of Vienna; and, in his invasion of Prussia, he fought the battle of Jena only to gain possession of Berlin. When about to invade Russia he kept the same object steadily in view. All his reported conversations are full of allusions to this ruling idea:—"I am on my way to Moscow," said he, "two battles will do the business; the Emperor Alexander will come on his knees, and then is Russia disarmed. Moscow is the heart of their Empire. The peace we shall conclude shall carry with it its own guarantee." And again, —"We must advance on Moscow, possess ourselves of the capital, and then dictate a peace." He was as logical as daring; for, having set before himself an object, he adapted the means to the end. Unlike the bunglers of our day, he did not move till he had all Germany for the basis of his operations, with an Austrian corps under Schwarzenberg for his right wing, and the Poles in the front ranks of his army; and when marching into Russia at the head of half a million of men, he must have felt that, if success did not crown his ambitious design, he would at least leave no excuse to inferior men to court disaster

by attempting that which he, with nearly all Europe by his side, had failed to accomplish.

And if the Moscow of 1812 resembled the city of our day, it might well have seduced the imagination of Napoleon. The traveller who has visited every other metropolis in Europe is struck with surprise and admiration at the unique spectacle presented by the capital of the Czars,—with its seven miles of suburb and city, interspersed with gardens and trees, its green roofs of sheet iron gleaming to the sun, the hundreds of cupolas, flashing with gold, deep blue, or green, spangled with stars, and surmounted with the Greek cross, from which hang gilt chains looped gracefully to the circumference of the cupola, and, crowning all, that picturesque cluster of palace, churches and monument, the Kremlin; altogether this bright and busy place, with the crowd of Asiatic looking people that fill its streets, carries us back in imagination to the Bagdad of a thousand years ago.

But will the conquest of the shores of the Black Sea, even to the complete extent which I have assumed, enable the Allies to impose humiliating terms of peace on the Russian government? In what way will it do so? They cannot reach within four hundred miles of the old Muscovite capital, around which are grouped thirty millions of the most industrious, energetic, and patriotic population of Russia—that nucleus of the Slavonic race before whose impassive fortitude conquering Tartars, Poles, Swedes, and French have successively recoiled. They cannot surround or destroy the enemy's army, or cut off its supplies, for, in retreating before the

Allies, whenever it may suit them, into the interior, the Russians will be falling back on their reinforcements and magazines; and whilst every step will increase their security, it will add to the difficulties and dangers of their pursuers, by drawing them away from the basis of their operations, their shipping.

They cannot sensibly impair the finances of the Russian government by cutting off the sources of its revenue, for it must be borne in mind that the territory bordering on the Black Sea comprises the poorest, the least populous, and the most uncivilized portion of European Russia.

The Isle of Wight is a more important source of revenue to England than the Crimea has ever been to the Russian Government.

Until the repeal of the English Corn Laws, less than ten years ago, the cultivation of some of the most fertile districts of the Don and the Dnieper was almost as much neglected as were the alluvial deposits of the Tigris and Euphrates. During the last few years these regions have made a progress in development hardly surpassed by any portion of the United States, and a corresponding increase in the exports of corn and other produce from the Black Sea and the Sea of Azoff has been witnessed. But, as I have elsewhere shown, the import trade, and consequently the Customs' revenue of Russia, has been systematically impeded by her prohibitive system; and this policy has been carried out, from political or other reasons, with especial jealousy in her Southern Ports, where, with the exception of

Odessa, hardly any import trade is carried on with which the allied cruisers can interfere, and where consequently there is but little Customs' revenue which they can curtail.

In the face of these facts, I cannot see how the Allies can hope to coerce Russia into humiliating terms of peace by any pressure which they can bring to bear on her material and financial resources from the present scene of military and naval operations. If we turn to the shores of the Baltic, and take credit for the utmost conceivable success of the arms of the Allies—assuming Cronstadt, and every other fortification on that coast, with all the shipping they protect, to be destroyed—still this would not give us possession of her modern capital. Petersburgh stands twenty miles above Cronstadt, on a shallow river. Besides its own population of half a million, it is connected by a railway with Moscow, which secures it the succour of that great centre of population and public spirit. But the fact that an army would for six months be cut off by the frost from all communication with its shipping is the great security against a maritime attack upon the capital. I need not however discuss a scheme which has never seriously engaged the thoughts of any sane man. The example and fate of Napoleon will for ever forbid an invasion of the interior of Russia, or an attack on her capitals, so long as the empire holds together. Seeing then the impossibility of subduing her by a direct military operation, the only chance of bringing her to submission is through the destruction of her commerce, and the cutting off the sources

of her revenue. The war then becomes a trial of endurance, and the question is—to what extent can Russia evade the effects of a blockade of her ports, and how far will her moral and material forces enable her to sustain the sacrifices inflicted on her. The first point to consider is the extent of her dependence on a maritime foreign trade, and this will be best elucidated by a reference to the

Protectionist Policy of Russia.

For thirty years before the appearance of our hostile cruisers on her coast, Russia had been so industriously occupied in blockading her own ports by her prohibitive tariff, as to have left less for her enemies to do in this respect than some of them may have supposed. When, nearly half a century since, Napoleon attempted to force upon Alexander, at the point of the bayonet, his "continental system," the trade of that empire was comparatively free, and its people were dependent on foreign countries, and especially England, for almost every comfort and luxury of civilized life. Travellers proceeded from this country to take orders for our manufactures in Russia, with almost as much facility as in Scotland or Ireland; and Englishmen opened their shops in Petersburgh for the supply of all articles of dress and furniture on nearly as great a scale as in the streets of London. So destitute were they of manufacturing resources that even the coarse woollens required for the clothing of the Russian army were purchased in England. At that time to have cut off the Russian empire from all commerce with foreign

countries would have been to doom a part of its people to nakedness. But upwards of thirty years ago, seduced by the example of England and other countries, it was resolved to "protect native industry in all its branches." A tariff was accordingly framed, imposing protective duties on foreign manufactures. At first the rates were not excessive, but being levied on weight and measure, and not on value, the consequence has been that as commodities have fallen in price, owing to cheaper raw materials, and improved processes of manufacture, the *ad valorem* duty has proportionately increased; to such an extent has this operation been felt in some cases, that articles which once paid 30 per cent are now, without any alteration of the tariff, subjected to a duty of from two to three hundred per cent.

No other country has suffered so much from the attempt to force a manufacturing system into artificial life as Russia—for no where else has it been made on so large a scale upon a community so unprepared for the experiment, and where the interests of the vast majority were so identified with agricultural pursuits. It would be difficult to say whether the injury has fallen more heavily on the government or people—the former through its loss of Customs' revenue, the latter owing to the scarcity and high price of manufactures, and the misdirection of their capital and labour. It would be plunging into the tediousness of a Free-trade argument to attempt to follow this evil into all its details and ramifications. One or two illustrations will suffice. The example of cotton yarn displays the workings

of the protective system in all its aspects. Formerly, when the duty was moderate, there was a large importation which yielded one of the principal items of the Customs' revenue. But, by the process just described, the *ad valorem* duty has constantly increased, so as gradually to operate as a prohibition on the lowest qualities, the most necessary for the consumption of the mass of the people, until at length the article contributes but an insignificant amount to the public treasury. In the meantime, beneath the hothouse of protection, a few score of spinning mills have grown to sickly maturity; but in spite of the privilege they have enjoyed, at the expense of the revenue and the consumer, they yield only a precarious return, and there is scarcely an example of a mill-owner having retired with a realized fortune. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of peasants, who employ the long winter at the loom, are condemned to the use of a yarn nearly double its natural price, and so inferior in quality that I was informed by a weaver in a village in the interior that he could tell whether he was working with English or Russian yarn after a few strokes of his shuttle.

Men of the highest rank in Russia are tempted by the protective tariff to devote to cotton spinning capital which would be far more usefully and profitably expended on their landed estates. A striking instance of this kind was presented to my notice at a cotton mill attached to a nobleman's chateau a few miles from Moscow. The steam engine and machinery, which were of English manufacture,

embraced every latest improvement, and were performing all those miracles of mechanism which a cotton mill only can exhibit. A few steps took me from the mill into the midst of the agricultural operations on the surrounding estate, and what a contrast did the implements of husbandry present! — The ploughs were on the model of those in use in the days of Cincinnatus; the scythes and reaping hooks might have been the instruments of the ancient Scythians; the spades in the hands of the peasants were either of wood, or merely tipped with iron; and the wheels and axles of the carts, and the teeth of the harrows, were entirely made of wood. And this is in miniature the spectacle which all Russia presents of the great staple industry, agriculture, being sacrificed to the protected interests of manufactures. I will give only one other illustration, in the article of sugar. Under the stimulus of exorbitant Customs' duties upon Colonial sugar, amounting to nearly cent per cent, the beetroot has been brought extensively into use in the central provinces of Russia, and having had, up to the last few years, no excise duty to pay, for every pound yielded by the home manufacture there was just so much prevented from contributing to the revenue at the Custom House. Latterly, when nearly one third of the sugar consumed is of domestic growth, at a loss of £700,000 to the revenue, an attempt has been made to subject it to a small excise duty. And from that moment commences the struggle between the government and the protected interest, which will cease only with the abandonment of the principle

of protection. In a word, the government of Russia has emulated with such success the example of more civilized countries that, with the sole exception of France, she has the most restrictive tariff in Europe. For a long time, indeed, she surpassed all her rivals in the impolicy of her export duties, in which some reform has been effected; but not until she had fostered rivalry in all directions, and helped to raise up competition against her tallow in Australia, her hides in Buenos Ayres, and her grain in the United States.

If this were the time to pursue the argument, it might be shown that great injury has been inflicted on her manufacturing industry by the protection afforded to particular interests. Russia, like all other countries, has its natural industries, from which capital and labour have been diverted by fiscal regulations: for example, the manufacture of boots, shoes, and all articles of leather, coarse linens, sail cloth, cordage, low-priced woollens, and articles of wood, are all employments indigenous to her soil, and in which she has natural advantages over other countries. No country is more favoured in the growth of coarse wool, flax, and hemp. And the ingenuity of the people in working on their woods is quite remarkable. Now, can it be doubted that if, following the law of the division of labour, the nation had been left to its own natural occupations, these industries would have taken deeper root during the last thirty-five years than they have been enabled to do whilst capital and labour have been systematically diverted to such exotic pursuits as cotton spinning,

or the manufacture of silks, stuffs, laces, fine woollens, &c. &c.?

By every test that can be applied, it will be found how much the prosperity of the empire has been retarded by the protective system. But the whole extent of the injury can never be appreciated, since it includes the unknown amount of progress which has been prevented. Free-trade would have created a dozen flourishing sea-ports like Odessa—whose prosperity has arisen solely from its freedom—through which would have entered the wealth of Western Europe. In no other way than through these avenues of foreign trade can a new community receive the capital and civilization which have been accumulating in the world from the earliest time. Peter the Great knew this when he welcomed with honours and rewards the captains of the first vessels that reached St. Petersburgh.

I now come to the practical inference to be drawn from the above facts. The argument cannot be evaded that the creation of a dozen additional sea-ports would have presented so many more vulnerable points of attack to the Allied squadrons. It cannot be denied that the blockade of the coast of Russia loses its power of coercion in proportion as she has pursued a course of economical isolation. You cannot ruin ports which a false policy has not allowed to exist, or impoverish merchants where none have been permitted to flourish, or by intercepting cargoes of fustians condemn to nakedness a population content with sheepskins, or cut off the saccharine luxuries of a people who prefer their own insipid beet-root

sugar to the more luscious product of the cane of the tropics, or by closing the navigation of the Neva deny the pleasures of the tea-table to the inhabitants of St. Petersburgh, who have voluntarily chosen to bring the whole of their favourite beverage four thousand miles overland from China, or expose them to the rigours of winter by interdicting them from receiving at Cronstadt the furs which are conveyed to them after a journey of a twelvemonth from their own territory in Siberia and North America. What, it will be exclaimed, has Protection all these advantages over Free-trade in time of war?

But Free Trade has its side of the picture. Had there been no protective tariffs in Russia or England during the last thirty years, and had an annual exchange of commodities grown up, as I believe would have been the case, between the two countries to the extent of (exports and imports) from forty to fifty millions sterling, there would have been powerful interests in both countries ranged on the side of peace. The warlike energies of a Czar would have been restrained in their impulses by the consciousness that not merely his flourishing sea-ports, but every village in his empire would feel in its daily avocations the evils of a state of hostilities; and, on the other hand, if in England, as we have been told by a Foreign Minister, the State Vessel was "drifting into war," all hands would have been at their posts to guard her from the impending danger. How is it that whilst newspapers rail and diplomatists wrangle on both sides of the Atlantic, nobody in England or America believes in the possibility of

war? Simply because there is an annual interchange of from forty to fifty millions between the two countries.

But there is another aspect of the question, which, even if peace could not have been preserved, denies to Protectionist poverty any superiority over prosperous Free trade as a defensive shield in time of war. It has been remarked by military critics that, if the Russians had possessed a line of railroad connecting Moscow with the Crimea, the invasion of that peninsula would have been too desperate an enterprise to have been entered upon, or that, if undertaken, the Allies would have been overwhelmed by the Russian reinforcements last winter. It is equally certain that, if Moscow and Petersburgh had been connected by railroads with the German frontier, the blockade of the Baltic ports would have been, practically, almost inoperative. Now can it be doubted that, if a wiser economical policy had prevailed in Russia, this great discovery in locomotion would have been applied to a country to which it is of all others in the world most suited—a region so level that for a thousand miles the engineer would hardly find occasion for a tunnel or embankment? Russia, like all primitive and agricultural communities, requires the capital of older countries for her development, and, by a beautiful law of diffusion, it is the interest of older nations to contribute from their savings to the improvement of the new. But how can this be accomplished when human legislation steps in to forbid the benign process? Capital consists of articles of subsistence, of clothing, metals, hard-

ware, earthenware, and other manufactures. If these be systematically excluded from a young country, how can it be enriched or improved by older states? Hundreds of millions of dollars have been advanced from Europe to the United States for the construction of railways, canals, and other internal improvements, not in the shape of gold and silver coin, but of manufactures, metals, and articles of consumption and even of luxury. If the present Russian tariff had been in force in America during the last thirty years, this aid could not have been contributed from the Old World to the New.

But to return to the subject of the Blockade.—Assuming that the sea-ports of Russia are to be henceforth closed by our cruisers, and her foreign trade by sea, such as it is, to be effectually cut off, let us consider what facilities she possesses for evading the blockade by an overland transit; and this brings us to the subject of the

Internal Communications in Russia.

There is no other country, with the exception of the United States, where the inhabitants will undertake such long journeys, by road or river, as in Russia, or face with so light a heart the difficulties of returning on foot after selling or losing their oxen or horses, or breaking up their rafts when many hundred miles from their homes. The reason is obvious in both cases; no other country presents the same wide extent of territory over which the population may travel and still find themselves at home. Groups of boatmen, carters, and others of this class are to be met with on the roads, trudging along on

foot, or hanging like bees on a waggon on which they have bargained for a ride, always merry, and frequently whiling away the journey with a song. The great distances to which heavy commodities can be moved by land carriage, and the extreme lowness of the charge, would be incredible unless all the circumstances of the cheapness of labour, the abundance of oxen and horses,* and the facilities for free pasturage on the steppes at particular seasons were taken into account. Furnished with a bag of biscuits or flour, and a little spirits to mix with their water, the peasants will start with a load of corn or merchandise in the spring, when herbage for their cattle is readily found, and men and beasts will arrive at their destination, after a journey of several hundred miles, in nearly as good condition as when they left home. I witnessed an incident at the great fair of Nishni Novogorod, showing what can be done in an emergency by wheeled conveyances. A cavalcade of carts and horses, which had been detained and plundered by a tribe of mountaineers, arrived after performing a journey of

* I purposely avoid encumbering these pages with lengthy statistics, but the following figures under this head are striking. Tengoborski, in his recently published volume on the "Productive Forces of Russia," sets down the number of horses in the Empire at eighteen millions, "nearly seven times as many as in France or Austria, taken separately, eleven and a half times as many as Prussia, and two and a half times as many as the whole three put together." He estimates the horned cattle at twenty-five millions, being as many as are to be found altogether in France, Austria, and Prussia. England seems to be almost the only country which does not trouble itself to "take stock" of its agricultural resources.

1400 wersts. They had found it necessary to press forward to reach their destination before the close of the fair, and both horses and drivers had certainly a jaded appearance; but they drove into the town at a dashing pace after travelling nearly 900 miles in twenty-six days, nor did it appear to be regarded as an extraordinary feat. I ascertained the cost of carriage in this particular case, and, after converting the poods and roubles into hundred weights and pounds sterling, I confess I found it incredibly low.

Immediately upon the declaration of war, the demand for land carriage for the conveyance of produce through the German and Polish provinces of Russia to the Austrian and Prussian frontiers, especially the latter, with a view to evade the blockade, attracted every cart and waggon, horse and bullock, not absolutely required for local purposes, within hundreds of miles of the main routes; and the extent to which this sudden want was supplied furnished a proof, which no other country in Europe could have afforded, of its immense resources in the rude means of internal traffic. It is difficult to ascertain with any thing like accuracy the extent of this improvised overland trade, the statistics of which have not been very correctly obtained by either the merchants or governments. The reasons are obvious; the produce has taken fresh routes, and thus may have failed at first to be minutely recorded; and it has also undergone a change in the time of exportation, for the purpose of profiting by the seasons most favourable for land transport, which must have rendered a comparison with former years for the present very dif-

ficult. Taking the estimates of the best informed merchants for my guide, I should be led to the conclusion that, omitting the article of grain, considerably more than half the ordinary amount of her exports find their way out of Russia, in spite of the blockade, by the overland-route; and I learn that the means of transportation are constantly on the increase. It must be borne in mind that for this diminished supply of Russian commodities higher rates are paid by the foreign consumer, which increase of price passes into the pocket of the Russian carrier. But it should also be remembered that the imports into Russia pass along the same route, and that the increased cost of such articles as cotton wool, and raw sugar, must be paid by the Russian consumer. As repects the article of grain, the Russian government has lately prohibited its export; and since the movements of the armies to the South, the demand for the government must have in a great measure compensated the growers of that region for the loss of the foreign market. Without pretending to statistical accuracy, or wishing to do more than suggest grounds for reflection and discussion, I will only add another broad fact or two, and then leave the reader to draw his own conclusions as to the extent to which our blockade is likely to coerce the Russians into what they choose to consider degrading terms of peace.

It is stated by M. Tengoborski that the exports and imports of the empire do not together amount to one-sixth of the returns of the home trade, which he puts down at 200 millions sterling. Following

his data, taking the exports at 15 millions, deducting two millions for the Asiatic trade, which our blockade does not touch, and assuming that half the remainder is intercepted, it gives six and a half millions as the amount of exports cut off by the blockade, and of this, one half might be again deducted as being grain, the exportation of which is interdicted by the Russian government. To appreciate the effect of this upon the enemy, it must be remembered that it is borne by 60 millions of people, the gross amount of whose agricultural productions is estimated by the above authority at 340 millions sterling.

One word upon a point arising out of this question. It has been alleged as a grievance against Prussia, that she permits this overland trade to pass through her territory. But we know that her Baltic ports have always been *entrepôts* for a considerable trade between Russia and foreign countries. Half a century ago, the whole of the foreign commerce of those Polish provinces which have lately found an outlet by the Black Sea, passed through Danzig, Konigsberg, and Memel, and to this day Danzig has a large share of the commerce of the kingdom of Poland, for which the Bug and other tributaries of the Vistula are the natural channels. That sedate peers and members of Parliament should be found gravely advocating the interference of the British government with the transit trade of Prussia is a sad illustration of the visionary reliances and schemes which have characterised the origin and conduct of this war!

There is still another way in which the internal communications of the country tend to mitigate the

pressure of a naval blockade. It has been for some time the policy of the government of Russia to favour the extension of her overland trade with Asia, at the expense of her maritime foreign commerce. The late Czar, although in his youth a pupil of Storch, evinced his contempt for political economy by imposing bounties and prohibitions for the encouragement of the Asiatic trade, and the injury of its rivals. The great focus of this traffic for a month in every year is at Nishni Novogorod. It is difficult to form a correct estimate of the extent of the internal and overland foreign trade of Russia without paying a visit to this renowned fair. To be sure, piles of merchandise, however huge or costly, offer but a disappointing spectacle to the traveller, but nothing can surpass in interest and novelty the living assembly which is here grouped as in a picture under his eye. Standing on a terrace-like eminence, which overhangs the town, the spectator looks down upon an angle formed by the junction of the rivers Wolga and Oka, and sees a countless concourse of traders from all parts of the East, busily buying and selling, crowding and jostling amongst the infinite variety of goods heaped up in rows many miles in length, or streaming like ants to and fro upon the wooden bridges thrown across the rivers. In the suburbs of the town are seen vast clusters of carts and waggons, which, with forty or fifty thousand horses, await their return loads; whilst as far as the eye can reach, the rivers are covered with boats and barges of every conceivable size and shape. The town, with its bright oriental cupolas, lies at his feet, and beyond

all, bounded by the horizon, is the plain over which the Wolga slowly winds its way to the Caspian. Such is the unique spectacle which, for more than a month every year, this otherwise quiet little town presents to the eye of the visitor. I was informed that the total value of the goods in the fair in 1847, the year of my visit, was about 60 millions of silver roubles, or upwards of 10 millions sterling. The following were the principal items, which I give less for their statistical value than as a means of estimating the relative importance of the different commodities brought to the fair:—

	Silver Roubles (in round figures six to the £ sterling).
Cotton Goods	10,000,000
Woollen ditto.	6,000,000
Linen	1,500,000
Silk	5,000,000
Furs	3,000,000
Skins	1,000,000
Metals	9,000,000
Glass and Hardware	600,000
Grain	1,500,000
Tea	6,000,000
&c. &c.	&c.

If, casting our eye over this list, we ask to what extent the raw materials of the above commodities are furnished from the interior or overland trade of the country—a most important question in its bearings upon our present inquiry—it will be found that, with the exception of the silks and cottons, and of them only in part, the supply of every one of these articles is independent of the maritime trade of the

empire. Nearly two-thirds of the raw silk consumed in Russia is brought from Georgia and Persia, overland, there being a small differential import duty in its favour. Upon this article, however, where the cost of transport forms so insignificant an item in its value, the blockade will be found practically inoperative, since the entire quantity required will no doubt find its way by land carriage, with little inconvenience, over the German frontier. Even the cotton manufacture, although it will have to support the great weight of injury inflicted by the blockade, is not wholly dependent on the sea-borne raw material; for I saw a caravan of cotton wool arrive at the fair from Bokhara, and was witness to orders being given by Russian calico printers, for the supply of madder and other dyes, to merchants from the territory of the Khan of Khiva. As an illustration of the manner in which the Russian government has fostered the Asiatic trade, to the discouragement of the maritime commerce, and as an example of the operation of this policy in mitigating the effect of a naval blockade, I will point to two articles forming large items in the above list. Tea and furs are great essentials to the indoor and outdoor comfort of Russian life, where everybody has a taste for the one, and wears the other; and if it were possible to stop the supply of either, it would be felt as a cruel and almost unendurable privation. But the importation of these articles by sea is prohibited by the Russian tariff, and, as I have before stated, they are brought overland from China, Siberia, and even North America. It will be seen that the tea at the fair alone amounted to six millions of roubles or a million

sterling, all brought overland from Kiachta, a distance of nearly four thousand miles. Instead of interfering with the supply of this article, the war has probably opened a fresh door for its importation; for I observe a large and sudden increase of our exports of tea to the continent, some of which, I suspect, is smuggled into Russia, along with the mass of bulky merchandise passing over her German frontier.

It would be an error, however, to say that the overland trade with Asia is altogether the forced and unnatural product of protection and prohibition. That the current of traffic should follow the course of the great river navigation, extending from Petersburgh to Siberia, is natural; and if, instead of attempting to give it an artificial stimulus by fiscal regulations, the government had devoted more attention to the removal of sand banks, and other obstructions, which render many of the rivers unnavigable in the late summer and autumn months—an evil increasing with the clearing of the forests and draining of the land—there can be little doubt that this trade would have been more important than it now is. The Wolga, unrivalled in volume among European rivers, watering more than 2000 miles of the Russian empire, and passing through its most populous and industrious districts, is nature's own highway for the conveyance of its products to the countries which border the Caspian Sea, from whence caravans convey the coarse woollens and other manufactures of Russia to the population of Khiva, Bokhara, and other tribes of Western Asia. And even in the far more remote regions of Thibet and

Central Asia, as we learn from the pages of that most pleasant and enterprising of modern travellers, Huc, are found occasional traces of Russian intercourse, in the articles of manufacture in use among the people of those almost inaccessible countries.

I have said sufficient to direct attention to the existence of a foreign trade which does not pass sea-ward at all; or, if so, through an inland sea to which our ships have no access; and which follows the course of rivers to the banks of which we cannot approach within hundreds of miles. To ignore these facts, or deny their importance, as showing the extent to which the Russians can baffle us in our attempt to coerce them by a naval blockade, were as foolish as to shut our eyes to an obstacle in our path which we are bound to surmount, and which we may surely more easily get over in the light of day than in darkness.

It will not be necessary to do more than allude to the fact, so generally known, that the maritime commerce of Russia was carried on almost exclusively in foreign bottoms, and that there is, therefore, no shipping interest in that country to be affected by our blockade.

But of more immediate moment is the question, how far the Russian government will be able, by the employment of the land transport of the country, to convey food and stores to the armies now assembling in such great force in the southern provinces of the empire. The great movement of this land carriage has for several years been in the direction of Odessa, and other ports of the Black Sea and Sea of Azoff.

All the grain brought from the interior to Odessa (excluding the portion which reaches it coastwise) is conveyed overland, that great commercial *entrepôt* being characterised by the singular anomaly of not standing upon a navigable river. A large part of its exports comes from the southern provinces of Russian Poland. Hundreds of bullock waggons and other vehicles arrive, during the busy season, in a single day at Odessa, in the outskirts of which town, as well as of Taganrog and other places, many thousands of these empty carriages may be seen awaiting their return home. Now, as the blockade of the Russian ports puts an end to the demand for this land carriage on merchants account, it has placed these carts and waggons at the disposal of the government, which has employed them for the transport of supplies for the army.

And here let me be allowed to express my amazement at the confident terms in which high authorities, here, and in France, (in France the very highest) spoke, during the summer and autumn, of the inability of the Russians to supply food for their army in the Crimea. A few hours after the news reached this country of our successful but inglorious operations among the granaries, barges, and fishing nets of the Sea of Azoff, and when a cry of exultation was raised at the certain prospect of starving the enemy from his stronghold, I incurred some odium by declaring, in my place in Parliament, that these devastations would have no influence whatever on the fate of the Russian armies. On that occasion a military critic, who writes under the singular *nom-*

de-plume of "a Hertfordshire Incumbent," and who lays claim to a minute knowledge of the topography and resources of Southern Russia, designated me a "political gamester" for hazarding so bold an assertion; and Mr. Danby Seymour, in the preface to his useful volume, published at that time, expressed also, but in more courteous terms, his dissent from my views. These gentlemen have, I doubt not, travelled longer and further in Russia than myself. My only advantage has been that I had possibly an eye and ear more open to the commercial movements, and the economical resources, of the country.

In the case in question, it was forgotten that the Crimea itself is nearly as large as Sicily: that, before the war, Eupatoria was a port of export for corn: that the peninsula swarms with cattle and sheep, and is the home of the horse: that the harvest was just gathered in, and that every eminence commanded views of abundant stores of corn and hay: that it required the utmost vigilance of the Cossack patroles to prevent the Tartars from supplying the Allies with fresh provisions; and that the Russians commanded the two roads, and the steppe (which at particular seasons is the best of roads,) leading to the granary of the empire. That, in the face of facts like these, well-informed persons should have persuaded themselves that an army having the exclusive range of the interior would be allowed to want subsistence, is an example of the manner in which men can bend their judgments to their wishes, and conspire as it were to impose on their own credulity, in spite of the

most convincing proofs that can be offered to their understanding.

Let us hope that with a more accurate knowledge of the resources of the enemy, and his means of transport, we shall put an end to that indiscriminate devastation of his coasts upon which we have relied for the success of our arms. To burn the food, destroy the forage, and sack the farm-houses which have the misfortune to lie within reach of our crews, may ruin individuals,—often foreigners, and but rarely of the Russian race,—may give to the war a character which we had flattered ourselves had passed away with the piracies of the Norsemen and the Buccaneers, but such exploits as these, though they may cast a stigma on our naval fame, and chill the sympathies of the civilized world, will not have the remotest influence on the fate of the war. The Russian armies do not subsist upon food grown near the sea coast, or the mouths of their great rivers. They have in their rear the most fertile country in the world, where the granaries of the cultivators are encumbered with grain, rendered almost valueless by our blockade. This corn, if conveyed by river, is brought only to such points of the navigation as are safe from attack, whence it is dispatched to the armies by that facility of land carriage which I have described: if by land, there are two seasons favourable to its transport, the late spring and mid-winter; but the latter, affording no pasturage for the draught cattle, is not generally preferred for the conveyance of bulky produce, such as corn, for long distances.

It is, however, the season when heavy materials are transported on sledges for short journeys, such as from a point where one river navigation ends to that where another begins, and in cases where expedition and not cheapness is the object. The government will avail itself of all these modes of conveyance, and so long as the communications are kept open with the interior, all the powers of the earth cannot prevent the Russian armies from being fed. I do not think there could be found a spot between the Carpathians and the Don, where, if wood, water, and the other requisites of a camp were at hand, the government could not furnish provisions for an army of 100,000 men.

But, in describing the methods to which the Russians may resort to evade the pressure of the blockade, or to meet the wants of the army, I would not be supposed to lose sight of the sacrifices and sufferings inseparable from a state of war. Mitigate the evil as best we may, there will still be a residuum of misery which every nation plunged in deadly hostilities with a powerful enemy will be compelled to endure. Forced levies of men and money, the suspension of some branches of industry, the derangement of others, the pall of mourning and sorrow suspended over the land—these are the dread accompaniments of war, from one or more of which no part of Russia is exempt. In estimating, however, the difficulties of our task, when undertaking to subdue such an empire to our will, it is necessary not only to ascertain the extent of suffering or privation we can inflict on its population, but also the

amount of moral force we evoke to sustain them in its endurance. The two most powerful and abiding of human motives—those which have extorted from nations the greatest voluntary sacrifices, and won for communities as well as individuals the crown of martyrdom—are the religion and patriotism of a people. Let us inquire whether, in its resistance to the demands of the Allies, the government of Russia can hope, by appealing to these sentiments, to rouse and sustain the enthusiasm of the population in favour of the war. And first of their

Patriotism and Love of Country.

The patriotic sentiment in Russia is not, as in France, or England, associated with a consciousness of superiority in arts, arms, and civilization; or, as in the United States, with the triumph of their political institutions; but, like the patriotism of the ancient Jews, it is blended with a spiritual pride, founded on the belief that Russia is the favoured depository of the orthodox religious faith. So strong is this feeling—perhaps all the stronger since it flatters the self-love of the people—that it surpasses even the sentiment of loyalty to the head of the State, identified though he be with the Church itself. This is illustrated by the custom of prefixing to the name of Russia, in their songs and public ceremonies, the word which is variously rendered from the Russ as "sacred" or "holy." I have been present in Russia at a great public banquet, where the health of the Czar was drunk with enthusiasm, but when the succeeding toast of "prosperity to holy Russia"

was given, it was received with reiterated cheering.

This attachment to country is not, however, exclusively founded on a religious sentiment. The Russian possesses in an eminent degree the organ to which phrenologists have given the name of "inhabitiveness." He is passionately wedded to his village home, and Russia has been described as a great village. Nay more, this people, whom Western Europe regards with terror as a horde of imprisoned barbarians, dissatisfied with their fate, and eager to escape from their rigorous climate and ungrateful soil, to pour the tide of conquest over more favoured and civilized regions, are, beyond any others, proud of their own country: they love its winter as well as summer life, and would not willingly exchange it for any other land. This characteristic of the Russian people is referred to by Custine, who gives us some specimens of letters, written by Russian servants travelling with their masters in Western Europe, to their friends at home, in which they complain of the humidity of the winter season, and long for the day when they shall inhale again the invigorating air of their own country, and glide over its plains of dry and hardened snow.

There is no greater delusion in the world than that which attributes to the Russian people a desire to overrun and occupy, in the spirit of the ancient Goths and Huns, any part of Western Europe. In discussing this subject with an intelligent native, at Moscow, he wound up an argument, to prove that the Russian people would not exchange their country

for any other in the world, with this remark, "Should some new *el Dorado* be discovered, to which all the population of the earth could be invited to migrate, there would be fewer volunteers found to abandon their homes in Russia than in any other part of Europe."

With the exception of the disposition to encroach upon neighbouring Mahometan countries, to which I have elsewhere alluded, the people feel no interest in foreign politics, and the intervention of the government in the affairs of Europe excites no sympathy in Russia. On the contrary, I found among the "old Russian party," at Moscow, a spirit of hostility to the incessant interference of the late Czar in the politics of the West. In fact, the foreign policy of the last reign was very much the offspring of the personal character of Nicholas, whose almost preternatural activity of mind and body expended its surplus energies on the affairs of other countries, after having interfered with the management of everything, great and small, at home. If a bridge was to be erected at St. Petersburgh or Kieff, he decided upon the plan; if a railroad was to be made from the capital to Moscow, he drew a straight line on the map, regardless of the wants of intermediate places, or the obstacles of the country through which it had to pass; not a church could be erected, but he must decide the form of the cupola. He was at once Pope, Commander-in-chief, President of the Board of Trade, and Secretary of State for both Foreign Affairs and the Interior. In fine, he affected to direct every thing, from the manœuvring of an army

to the marshalling the company at an imperial christening. Those who pretend to have known him best say that, in his interference with the affairs of other countries, he did not seek aggrandizement of territory, so much as to make himself felt as the regulating power of Europe, to which task he was constantly invited by princely and diplomatic flatterers, some of whom, afterwards, affected to be greatly alarmed at his encroaching tendencies. I do not presume to know his objects, but I believe they excited little interest in his people. The invasion of Hungary was not popular with any class or party. It was the act of Nicholas, against the advice of the most influential men in his empire: and, had their opposition been aided by one word of remonstrance from our government, when the Russians made their first tentative movement across the Turkish territory into Transylvania, there is no doubt in the minds of those most competent to judge, that that great outrage, pregnant as I believe with future evil, would not have been consummated by the larger invasion which succeeded it.

There is another characteristic of the Russian people, so diametrically opposed to the opinion entertained of them, at present, in this country, that I should hesitate, as Sterne says, to "risk my credit by telling so improbable a truth," if I could not bring pretty strong evidence to my aid. The Russians are, perhaps, naturally the least warlike people in the world. All their tastes and propensities are of an opposite character. Even in their amusements there is an absence of rudeness and violence, and

they take no pleasure in the brutal sports to be found elsewhere. They delight in music, dancing, and flowers. I was told by an American, having the control of nearly 2000 workmen, chiefly serfs, in a large establishment connected with the Moscow Railway, that such an occurrence as a quarrel or collision amongst them never happened. Direct capital punishment was *professedly* abolished nearly a century ago in deference to the genius of the people, which abhors the shedding of human blood. I have often found myself stopping to observe, in the streets of St. Petersburgh and Moscow, some amusing displays of this tenderness for life and limb on the part of the Droshkéy drivers, who scream and gesticulate at the foot passengers approaching their vehicles, with an energy that shows them to be far more terrified at the idea of the injury they may inflict, than others are at the danger of being run over. But I will quote a passage, on this subject, from one whose views on the Eastern Question do not generally accord with my own. "The most singular thing is," says Mr. Danby Seymour, in his volume on Russia and the Black Sea, "that the people among whom this military organization of the whole nation prevails, is, without exception, the most pacific people on the face of the earth, and upon this point I believe no difference of opinion exists among all observers. Having lived for several years in a position which enabled me to mix much with the officers and men of the Russian army, such is my strong conviction of the Russian character. M. Haxthausen mentions, as a point admitting of no

doubt, 'the absence of all warlike tendency among the Russian people, and their excessive fear of the profession of a soldier.' The Russian people have no pleasure in wearing arms, like the Turk or the Pole; even in their quarrels among themselves, which are rare, they hardly ever fight, and the duel, which now often takes place among Russian officers, is contrary to the national manners, and a custom imported from the West. The people take no pleasure in the fighting of beasts or birds, as in bull-fights, ram-fights, or cock-fights, which are common amusements among some Eastern as well as most European nations; and when the Russian is drunk, which often happens, he is never quarrelsome, but on the contrary caressing and given to tears. But, on being roused, he exhibits a degree of patient endurance which is astonishing, and which is very deeply seated in the national character."

The question arises, is there anything in the present war peculiarly calculated to draw forth that latent enthusiasm of the Russian character referred to at the close of the above quotation? It must be admitted that nothing is so likely to rouse the energies of a patriotic people as the invasion of their soil. The mere threat of landing in England arrayed every man against Napoleon, extinguished all our domestic feuds, and converted the whole male population into soldiers, thus furnishing the recruits for those armies which afterwards enabled Wellington to perform so great a part in the war with France. We all know the effect produced upon the Russian people by the invasion of 1812; when, although they

were beaten in every engagement, not one voice was raised for peace or negociation; but the whole population, after consigning their most venerated cities to the flames, disappeared so completely at the approach of the invaders, as to draw from an eye-witness the remark that Napoleon could not have bribed, with all he possessed, one pure blooded Russian peasant to voluntarily clean his boots or stable his horse.

It has been argued that, the Crimea being a recent acquisition, its invasion will not be resisted with so much obstinacy as was that of the older portions of the empire. But there are reasons why both the nobles and people may be as little inclined to loose their hold on this peninsula as any other part of "holy Russia." It is associated in a twofold manner with the religious feelings of the country; for, as Prince Gortchakoff took care to tell the army in his last bulletin, it is the spot where Vlademir, the first Christian sovereign of Russia, received baptism, whose abandonment of paganism was the signal for the conversion of all his subjects. It is, moreover, a province wrested from Mahomedanism, and territory won from the infidel has a precious value in the eyes of the orthodox. But there are motives of a different kind, associated with the selfish instincts of the higher classes, which are likely to provoke a stubborn resistance to the arms of the invaders. I do not allude merely to the attractions of a southern clime, though it may be well to bear in mind that the Crimea is the Isle of Wight of Russia, to which the nobility resort in the summer months, and

where some of the wealthiest and most influential of their order possess elegant residences, and valuable estates. But the conquest of provinces peopled by a less civilized race, as in the Crimea, enriches in a special manner the dominant class in Russia, by conferring on it not only territorial aggrandisement, but exclusive power and patronage in the administration of their affairs. The annexation of countries inhabited by a more advanced population, such as the German provinces of the Baltic, far from affording a field of preferment to the Sclavonic conquerors, reacts upon them in an opposite manner, by supplying a body of administrators whose superior education enables them to compete successfully with the dominant race for public employment throughout the whole empire. It is in this way that Germany has, during the last half century, invaded Russia with her functionaries, until at length a spirit of jealousy has grown up in the Sclavonic mind, claiming for the native race a larger share in the government patronage. These observations apply, indeed, to all kinds of employments, public or private, and to the humblest as well as the highest. Enter Riga, or Revel, for example, and you will find the Russian part of the population occupying the lowest quarter of the town, and performing all the menial offices to the Teutonic merchant or shopkeeper; but a visitor to Eupatoria or Simpheropol, before the Anglo-French invasion, would have found the Russians, however humble in rank, always taking the lead of the Tartar population.

It follows, if my data be correct, upon which every one will form his own opinion, that the Russians will resist the attacks of the Allies on their southern territory, with as much tenacity as they would an encroachment on their western frontier. I am bound to add my belief that they would be more likely to abandon Esthonia, or Finland, improbable as that may be, than agree to a peace which should leave any part of their territory on the Black Sea at the disposal, or in the possession of, the Allied powers. And it may be doubted whether any plan could have been devised, more calculated to afford to the government the opportunity of appealing at once to the patriotism of the people and the selfish instincts of the nobility, than that of invading and holding in occupation any part of the territory of southern Russia.

"To defend our country is to defend our religion," says Sir Walter Scott, in speaking of the patriotic resistance to Napoleon's threatened invasion of this country. Let us see whether we are likely to encounter a similar impediment in the

Religious Feeling in Russia.

The state of religion in Russia carries us back for a parallel to our own middle ages. There is no other part of the world where a Peter the Hermit, or a Thomas à Beckett could hope to find a field for successful agitation; for in Russia alone the entire mass of the male population is still religious. It is the only Christian country I have visited where two-thirds

of the congregations in their temples of worship, even in large cities, consist of *men*. The nation is in the fervour of church-building, similar to that which endowed England with such noble ecclesiastical monuments four or five centuries ago. A not insignificant portion of the national industry is employed in making silver and gilt ornaments, casting statues and columns, moulding and burnishing domes and cupolas, or carving marbles for the erection and embellishment of cathedrals and churches; and the most gorgeous products of the loom are destined for the hangings of the altars, or the cloth of gold vestments of the priests.

It will be said that this is not religion but superstition. Leaving to the pen of Pascal to define the difference between the two, it is enough to know that it supplies the great, and indeed almost the only motive power of public opinion, and serves as a bond of union between the people and government, enabling the latter to wield the whole strength of the empire, whenever it can appeal to the fanaticism of the population. The Czar, as pontiff and secular ruler, concentrates in his person the moral and material forces of the empire. There is, however, a great abatement of the gross personal worship with which he was once treated. A very old inhabitant of St. Petersburgh related to me that, in his youth, the common people went down on their knees, and crossed themselves at the approach of the Czar; but that he had lived to see a great change, when even the majestic figure of Nicholas failed to command a greater homage than a respectful obeisance and the

sign of the cross, and that many omitted the latter mark of veneration.

It must be admitted that the Greek church has shown less intolerance—not a difficult achievement—than other dominant sects; and this is probably one of the secrets of the success with which the Russian government has held together the heterogeneous religious elements of which its empire is constituted. And who can tell but that if the Poles, when they conquered Muscovy, had extended a similar toleration to the subjected Greek church, they might have retained their ascendancy to this day? This toleration has, however, certain limits, not uncommon on the Continent, but not very consonant with our notions of religious liberty. No proselytizing is allowed. Each man's creed is stereotyped from his birth. If there be any relaxation in this rule, it is in favour of the Establishment, which sometimes receives converts to the privileged fold, and, on the other hand, deals most severely with deserters from its own pale. The followers of Mahomet, *living within the Russian dominions*, are safe from molestation, and enjoy complete liberty of conscience. In some instances, places of worship have been erected for them at the expense of government. At Nishni-Novogorod I found a mosque, flanked by two Christian churches, built by the state for the accommodation of visitors to the Fair. I was conducted by the Mollah, an intelligent good-tempered man, through this building, where, upon the green cloth that covered the floor, sat, cross-legged, with their shoes beside them, Tartars, Persians,

Khivites, and Bokharians: and let me recount a pleasant rebuke I received from my guide, who, on my commenting on the utter want of decoration displayed in the plain whitewashed walls of his temple, without fixture or furniture of any kind, with the exception of a small pulpit, replied with quiet earnestness—"Why should we have ornament here? God wants only the heart." But we should greatly err in supposing that this feeling of toleration towards Mahomedans extends to nations bordering on the Russian empire, and more especially to the Turks.

And, to prevent misapprehension, let it be understood that, in remarking, as I have done, upon the absence of all desire on the part of the Russian people to interfere in the affairs of Western Europe, I draw a broad line of distinction between the states of Christendom and the countries over which the conquering hosts of the Crescent still hold sway. There can be no doubt that the Russian people have been brought to the belief that it is their mission to regain for their religion the ascendancy over those neighbouring countries, at present subjected to Mussulman rule, which were formerly under a Christian government, and where a large portion of the population are still Christians. That the nobility may be also actuated by the lust of conquest—that, coveting the fair regions now rendered sterile, in spite of the most genial climate, by Turkish sloth and barbarism, they may have indulged in dreams of spoliation, and a new field of enterprise and glory, I can readily believe. But the masses in Russia have no such secular objects in view: they are incapable of

understanding any question of foreign policy, unless it be presented to them as a religious duty, and they cannot be moved through any other impulse: and the question which concerns us is—whether, among the moral forces arrayed against us in the present war, we shall have to encounter the strongest and most enduring of all motives, the religious sentiment of the people.

All who have seen the proclamations of the Russian government to the people, the bulletins of the commanders to the army, and the addresses of the dignitaries of the church—to say nothing of the paradings of saintly images and relics—must have observed the constant assumption that the country was engaged in a religious war. It may be objected that these appeals have been hypocritical, or even blasphemous; and, looking to the quarters from whence some of them emanated, I am afraid the charge is not unfounded. But where shall we find in Europe a government too scrupulous to traffic with the religious feelings of a nation? The question, however, is not as to the sincerity and honesty of the governing class in Russia, for which I should hesitate to vouch, but whether the great mass of the people, who are never hypocritical, will be induced to endure the sacrifices of life and fortune which must attend a protracted struggle, from the belief that they are engaged in a religious war. We, in England, are certainly not in a position to deny the religious character of the origin of the war, without implying some insincerity in high places; for we read, on the title-page of the ponderous Blue Books upon the Eastern

question presented to Parliament,—"*Correspondence respecting the rights and privileges of the Latin and Greek churches in Turkey.*" And I suspect that, with one at least of the western nations engaged in the contest, the *animus*, both in its origin and progress, partook much more of the religious element than many honest unsuspecting people suppose. Be this, however, as it may, I do not think the evidence leaves room to doubt that the Russian people are persuaded that they are engaged in a struggle for the Greek faith, against their old foes the followers of Mahomet, and their allies.

They know nothing of the subtleties of diplomacy: they have never heard of the Four Points: they are ignorant alike of history and geography: but tradition tells them of the long and fierce struggle which their forefathers sustained in throwing off the Tartar yoke, and of their incessant wars with the Ottoman Porte, in which they were not always the aggressors. They see around them the traces of an ancient Mahomedan domination, and are reminded, by the cross which surmounts the crescent above the cupolas of their churches, of the final triumph of their arms over the enemies of their faith. They also know, for their priests have taken care to tell them, that the Turk still sits enthroned at Constantinople, where the shrine of St. Sophia, the very cradle of their faith, is defiled by the rites of Islamism. They are told, too, that in the fairest regions of Europe, once the patrimony of the Greek church, millions of Christians, who are groaning under Turkish despotism, look to them for succour, and pray for the success of their arms. If

any thing be wanting to confirm them in the belief that they are engaged in a war against Mahomedanism, it is afforded by the policy of the Allies in placing bodies of Turks at Yenikalé, and Kertch, and by the attempt upon Georgia, by Omar Pasha. These demonstrations will be made use of for persuading the Russian people that the object of the Allies is to recover for Mahomedanism its lost dominion. The war will thus be made to assume more directly the character of a struggle between the Crescent and the Cross, and the serf, although passionately attached to the place of his birth, and dreading the conscription more than any thing on this side the grave, will suffer himself to be taken from his village home with less reluctance than he would feel in any other cause, and he will resign himself to his fate in the honest belief that he is fighting the battle of Christianity.

Having thus glanced at the extent of the coercion we can apply to the population of Russia, the means at their disposal for evading our power, and the moral forces which will be roused into action to sustain them under the injuries we may inflict, it only remains to consider whether, through the operations of any other and more direct cause, the Russian Government may find itself compelled to submit to our terms; and this brings us naturally to a few observations on the

Finances of Russia.

Such a thing as a printed budget, in our sense of the word, giving to the public the details of the

income and expenditure of the Russian Government, no human eye ever yet beheld: This fact shews with what readiness men will part with their money, if a borrower will only assume a sufficiently lofty and imperious claim to their confidence. Before an individual will invest his savings in a public company, he takes care to know the characters of the directors, and stipulates for annual, or half-yearly accounts. But here is a Government which does not condescend to tell us the amount of its income or expenditure, and yet, up to the breaking out of the war, it could obtain money on as good terms in the London market as the Directors of the Brighton Railway Company. At the same time, this Government was accused of making the worst possible use of the borrowed money, by maintaining enormous and menacing armaments in time of peace, by plotting against the liberties of Western Europe, and by the employment of spies and agents to frustrate the workings of good government everywhere. Verily, if these accusations were true, the capitalists who advanced funds to the Russian Government were base enough to furnish the means for their own corruption and enslavement.

A few years ago it was the fashion to exaggerate the wealth of the Czar. A very simple and natural operation of the Bank of St. Petersburgh in 1847, in investing a couple of millions sterling in the Funds of Western Europe, at the time of the sudden and enormous demand for corn from that country, owing to the Irish famine, was trumpeted to the world as an evidence of the overflowing wealth of the Russian Government. Then followed the reports that the

Czar was a subscriber for £2,000,000 to the Austrian loan; that he had advanced £500,000 to the Pope; and £250,000 to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. I took more than one public opportunity of doing my best to throw discredit on these golden illusions, by pointing to the fact that the Russian Government was a constant borrower, which was inconsistent with its being so largely a lender; and as its assumed wealth, coupled with its extensive command of soldiers, was held up as a terror to the rest of Europe, I drew attention to the fact that Russia had never been able to march an army across her frontier, to carry on war in a foreign country, without being obliged to apply to the capitalists of Western Europe for a loan. Thus, in 1829, before the close of her first campaign against the Turks, she was in treaty with the house of Hope and Co. of Amsterdam for a loan, with the proceeds of which her generals next year fought and bribed their way almost to the gates of Constantinople. Two years later, her armies were put in motion against the Poles by means of funds derived from the same source. In both cases, it was the money of Dutch, English, French, and German capitalists that sustained the strength and nerved the arms of the Russian soldiers in these devastating campaigns. And again, in 1849, on the occasion of the invasion of Hungary, there not being money enough in the treasury to move the army across the frontier, the floating debt was increased by upwards of three millions sterling, the ukase which announced this issue of treasury bonds declaring that it was to meet the expenses of the Hungarian war. And, in

less than six months afterwards, the Czar was under the necessity of borrowing in London and Amsterdam five millions sterling, under the pretence of constructing a railroad, but really to cover the expenses of this war. In fact, an annual expenditure exceeding the income being the normal state of the finances of Russia, whenever an extraordinary exigency arises, calling for a payment beyond her own frontiers, she is obliged to have recourse to the capitalists of Western Europe.

I recur to these past incidents for no other purpose than to secure a perfect understanding between the reader, whom I will take the liberty of supposing to be an advocate of the war as it has been carried on by the invasion of the Russian territory, and myself, whose relative situation in the controversy is completely reversed by that act. For more than twenty years that I have taken a part in the discussions upon the dangers apprehended from Russian ambition, I have endeavoured, however unsuccessfully, to show the groundlessness of the public alarms, *owing to the poverty of that Government, and its inability to set in motion great bodies of men for a distant enterprise.* Every argument I have used has been in opposition to those who presented to us the spectacle of Russian *aggression* as the evidence of danger to this country. But from the moment that we landed an army upon the soil of that empire—which again and again I have denounced in Parliament as the rashest act in our history—I have myself become the alarmist, *and I confess to have felt far more concern and surprise at the disposition to underrate the power of Russia to defend*

her own territory, than I ever did at the comparatively harmless exaggeration of her recources for an aggressive war. By assailing her at home, three thousand miles from our own shores, we have not only abandoned every security which that vast distance afforded us against her hostile designs, but we have given her enormous advantages, of different kinds, in the struggle, which in no other way she could have enjoyed, and in nothing will this be more apparent than in examining into the effects of the war upon the financial resources of Russia.

In the autumn of last year, a controversy arose between the late M. Leon Faucher, the eminent French economist, who had published some disparaging statements upon the Russian finances in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, and M. Tengoborski, a confidential employé of the government at St. Petersburgh, and the well-known author of some valuable statistical works upon Austria and Russia, in the course of which the latter published some facts, not before given to the world upon such high authority, which incidentally threw a little light upon the mystery of Russian finance. As he did not, however, give us a complete budget, I subjoin a detailed account of the income and expenditure of the Russian Government, which I obtained at St. Petersburgh. The accounts are of old date, and for various years, and although I have no reason to doubt, in the main, their correctness, yet I do not offer them as of any statistical value, but merely as a means of comparing the several items, and estimating their relative importance, more especially as respects the various sources of income:—

INCOME FOR THE YEAR 1842.

Total 617,500,000 paper roubles (10½*d.* each), or £27,000,000 sterling.

Principal Items for the Year 1845.

	Paper Roubles (10½*d.* each).
Spirits	160,000,000
Customs	103,000,000
Capitation and other direct Taxes	70,800,000
Stamps	22,000,000
Salt Monopoly	18,000,000
Mines	20,000,000
*Gold Duty	21,000,000
Tobacco	8,000,000
Licenses, Spirits, &c.	27,000,000
Passports and Personal Licenses	10,000,000
Post Offices	7,000,000

EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 1838.

Total 505,116,000 paper roubles (10½*d* each), or £22,100,000 sterling.

	Paper Roubles (10½*d.* each).
Civil List	17,550,000
Clergy	4,540,000
Diplomacy	5,300,000
Navy	35,350,000
Army	186,400,000
Interior Administration	34,700,000
National Education	14,360,000
Roads, Canals, &c.	8,950,000
Colonization	2,300,000
Encouragement to Industry	302,000

* The Government does not work the gold mines itself, but receives a per centage on the produce, which averages a little over 3 millions sterling per annum.

Public Buildings	3,200,000
Pensions	19,500,000
Ditto in Land	5,960,000
Donations	1,800,000
Expenses of Collection and Administration of Finances	67,185,000
Interest of Debt	85,000,000
Reserve Fund	12,000,000

In casting the eye over the above items, under the head of Income, our first inquiry naturally is, "To what extent are they likely to be diminished by the war?" With the exception of the Customs revenue, amounting, in the above account, to four millions sterling, or one-seventh of the whole, all the others come under our denomination of "Inland Revenue," against which no direct blow can be struck by the blockade. M. Tengoborski, who puts down the income from Customs duties at five millions sterling, for the average of the five years 1848—1852 (alleging a great increase during the preceding years), assumes that a falling off of a million, or 20 per cent, will occur in consequence of the blockade. I suspect that he under-estimates the loss. It will be seen, by the above account, that nearly a third part of the income of the Russian government arises from spirit duties and licenses. The revenue from gold mines, capitation tax, stamps, or even customs, sinks into insignificance in comparison with the money raised from intoxicating drinks. So far from my account being an exaggeration, this terrible feature in Russian finance assumes even more hideous proportions in M. Tengoborski's statement, for he puts down

nearly fourteen millions sterling for the excise on spirits, out of a total revenue of 37½ millions, or more than one-third of the whole: and he adds that, so far from anticipating a large loss upon this item, "the contracts entered into for farming the spirit licenses for 1855 and 1856, in a great number of provinces, show an augmentation, as compared with 1853, of several hundred thousand francs." He states that the total ordinary revenue of the Russian government for 1853 was 37½ millions sterling; that in 1839 it was only about 27 millions, thus shewing an increase of 10 millions, or 36 per cent, in fifteen years; and that this has arisen without any augmentation of existing imposts. It will be seen that the account furnished to me makes the revenue in 1842 to have been 27 millions, the same as is set down above for 1839. If the statement given to me was correct, the whole of the alleged increase of 10 millions took place between 1842 and 1853, which, in the absence of any reform in the tariff, and whilst protective and prohibitive duties were steadily devouring the customs revenue, is so extraordinary as to warrant the epithets, "enormous, unlooked-for, and incredible," which burst from M. Faucher, when commenting on the figures, and it will certainly require all the weight of M. Tengoborski's statistical reputation to give currency to such a statement. Upon the whole revenue for 1854, he estimated a loss of only about two millions sterling, an opinion which I have no doubt the last year's experience has long since dispelled.

In dealing with the expenditure side of the account,

he confines himself to the only items which interest us at the present time, the military and naval budgets. In the above detailed account of the expenditure for 1838, the army is set down at £8,150,000, and the navy at £1,500,000. M. Tengoborski says that an effective army of from 800,000 to 900,000 men can be kept up in Russia for £14,000,000; and a corresponding navy for £2,400,000; and that, if even the effective force of the army were carried to 1,250,000 men, it could be maintained for 22 millions. Upon this subject he was at issue with M. Faucher, who had set down a much higher estimate, and had arrived at the conclusion that the annual deficit, beyond its ordinary revenue, which the Russian government would have to make good for carrying on the war, would amount to £20,000,000. Warming with his subject, the Russian functionary thus meets even this challenge of the Frenchman: "But, admitting that, in consequence of extraordinary and unforeseen expenses, the deficit even amounted to this sum, which I wholly discredit, I know enough of the financial position of Russia, and of the means at her disposal, to venture to affirm with confidence that she would be able to bear it, even during many years, from her extraordinary internal resources; and if even it were necessary to augment the debt during the war from one to two milliards (40 to 80 millions sterling), this burden, great as it is in itself, would not be in disproportion with the natural resources of the country, and those at the disposal of the government, as is apparent from the immense properties it possesses." It is well

to see to what extent, and with what confidence, a man of reputation on financial matters, and a "privy councillor of the Russian Empire," will commit himself and his government for the future, even if we do find, on analysing the details of his case, that he breaks down in his ways and means. I confess, with all possible respect for the talents of M. Tengoborski, I attach very little value to these estimates of the income and expenditure of the Russian government in a time of war. He makes too light of the general depression of affairs throughout the empire which must follow from a protracted war, and of the consequent falling off in all branches of the revenue; and he forgets the unforeseen expenses, those "supplementary estimates" with which we are so well acquainted in the House of Commons. War is a monster whose appetite grows so fast by what it feeds on, that it is quite impossible beforehand to measure its capacity for consumption, and the only safe way is to be provided with far more than at any given time seems likely to be required for its support. The writer in question does not condescend to say how the money will be raised in the interior of Russia. Those vast territorial possessions of the government to which he alludes, will *they* be made to do duty as the Mississippi Valley and the Domains of France did under similar exigencies? I believe there is but one resource, and, with whatever prudery M. Tengoborski might have averted his eyes, and protested against even an allusion to the expedient, in August 1854, yet, probably, the twelvemonths' war which has since passed over his head has rec on-

cited him to the inevitable necessity,—nay, if we may credit the journals, it has already been embraced by the Russian government.

The banking system of Russia is entirely in the hands of the government. Banks of issue, deposit, and mortgage are all under imperial direction or guarantee, and a large part of the landed property of the country is mortgaged to these institutions. The Czar is in fact the "credit mobilier" and the "credit foncier" of the Empire. The great centre of this system is the Bank of Issue founded by Catharine in 1768. At a time when we have, in this country, a party clamouring for irredeemable small notes,—and who may be nearer success than many of us suppose,—a few words on the career of this establishment may not be inappropriate.

For twenty years after the foundation of this Bank, and whilst paper money was still in its infancy in Russia, its notes retained their par value. Being a legal tender, both to the government and in private transactions, and always convertible at their full value, they acquired public confidence, and, being found a convenience in the operations of commerce, they sometimes rose to a premium. But being a government institution, and every additional rouble put into circulation being so much secured without trouble for the imperial treasury, need we wonder that the temptation proved too great, and that so many notes were issued that there was not sufficient gold and silver to redeem them on demand? Once relieved, by its own act, from this obligation, the government, like all others in similar circumstances,

went on coining paper money, not according to the wants of the public, but to meet its own necessities. The consequence was a continual depreciation in its value, commencing in 1788, and extending over a period of more than half a century, the notes sometimes falling to nearly a fifth of their nominal value, then again recovering a little, till at last the rouble note, nominally worth 3*s* 4*d*, settled down at about 10½*d*, at which it remained for several years, until, by an ukase in 1843, the old notes were called in *at that rate*, and exchanged by the government for new notes at *the old rate of* 3*s* 4*d*, giving until the year 1848 for completing the exchange. From that time the accounts have been wholly kept in the restored currency, called silver roubles, to distinguish them from the old depreciated paper rouble of 10½*d*, with which the people had been accustomed to keep their accounts.

But, as this transaction brought home to every man's understanding and pocket a proof of the inherent vice and insecurity of paper money, the plan for restoring the currency was accompanied by safeguards and protestations which were to prevent the possibility of any future frauds. The government, knowing itself to be suspected, put forth a plan for keeping at all times so large a reserve of specie as should secure the holders of notes against the possibility of loss; and this stock of bullion, instead of being entrusted to the control of the government alone, was to be confided to a mixed commission, comprising deputations of merchants, nobles, and foreign consuls, joined with a govern-

ment commission named for the purpose. The place designated for the safe custody of the treasure was the fortress of St. Petersburgh, and the presence of this mixed body of public functionaries and merchants was necessary at all times when an addition to or abstraction from its amount took place, and they were bound to publish every such alteration to the world. In accordance with this regulation, the following notice appeared, some time since, in the papers:—

"RUSSIA.—The *Gazette du Commerce* says:—'The stock of coin kept on hand for the purpose of cashing bank notes having diminished, it has been thought necessary to replace what is wanting by transporting 5,000,000 of roubles from the fortress of St. Petersburgh. On the day appointed for this purpose, in the presence of the assistants, of the comptroller of the empire, the members of the committee of revision, the delegates from the Bourse, and the foreign commercial chargés d'affaires, the sum destined to be removed was taken from the vaults of the fortress. It consisted of 2,000,000 roubles in gold, and 3,000,000 in silver. This sum, under guard of the above-mentioned personages, and escorted by infantry and cavalry, was transported to the depôt of the Bank. The council of the Bank, in full sitting under the presidency of Prince Alexander Ivanowitsch, Tschermycsheff, and in the presence of the above gentlemen, assured themselves that the sum was the same as that taken from the fortress. The Act relative to the removal was then signed by all present. This Act, among other things, establishes the fact that there remained in the vaults of the fortress of

Peter and Paul, after the removal of the five million roubles, 101,528,595 roubles.'"

Such were the formalities and precautions taken to secure the convertibility of the paper circulation, and *this time*, at all events, it was thought that the public was safe from the possibility of a depreciated currency. Seven years have hardly elapsed since the existing paper money came exclusively into use, and yet who can doubt that, if it have not already begun, it is on the verge of again beginning the same course of depreciation as was run by the *assignats* which preceded it? It is now 87 years since the Bank was founded. During sixty years its notes have been inconvertible; for a great part of that period they were not worth a third of their nominal value, and the Bank could only emerge from its state of insolvency by throwing the whole of the loss, arising from its own breach of faith, upon the public. And this, with more or less of modification, is the history of government banks of issue, and to some extent of private banks also, all the world over.

I know not to what other internal or external resources the Russian Privy Councillor may look for making up the deficit occasioned by the war, which he says can be met for many years; but I have not the least doubt that, if driven to extremities, one of the expedients will be the appropriation of the reserve fund of the Bank, and the issue of inconvertible notes. Whether some fresh device may be invented, such as the pledging for security the five-sixths of the Russian Empire, now occupied by its forests, steppes, and marshes,

I know not; but the Allied Powers will entertain a higher opinion of the morality of the government at St. Petersburgh than myself, if they do not take for granted that, before it will submit to what it considers ignominious terms of peace, it will avail itself of the resources of the Bank, and all the temporary financial expedients which its machinery will afford.

In the controversy to which I have alluded, M. Leon Faucher, quoting from the Paris *Moniteur*, put down the reserve of bullion belonging to the Bank of St. Petersburgh, in March 1854, at 116 millions of silver roubles, or £19,333,000. M. Tengoborski, in his correction of this statement, is very explicit; and as it is a subject upon which, hitherto, no secrecy has been observed, but as, on the contrary, publicity has formed a prominent part of the system, I do not believe that a man in his position would have put his name to a statement so easily disproved, if incorrect, unless he was sure of its truth. "The reserved bullion," he says, "amounted in March last not to 116 millions but to 159,918,000 silver roubles, (£26,653,000.) and it is at this present time (16-28 Sept. 1854) 146,563,000 roubles (£24,427,000.) being more than 42 per cent of the total amount of bank notes in circulation, and held by the banks, (dans les caisses de l'état) which amounts to 345,927,000 roubles (£69,185,400.)" This is a large sum of bullion, more than is at present to be found in the vaults of the two great national Banks, in London and Paris, together, and although it may have undergone considerable diminution, there is doubtless enough to fill up the deficit to be caused by another

campaign, and to that purpose, failing all other resources, it may safely be assumed that it will be devoted. This is however but the smaller part of the assistance which the government will find in the national Bank, should the war be pushed to extremities. It will be seen that the amount of notes, in the hands of the public, and in the *caisses* of the government establishments, is set down at 345,927,000 roubles. To what extent could this paper money be increased, after it had been rendered irredeemable by the abstraction of the specie reserve?

At the time of the conversion of the old paper roubles, in 1843, there were more than 600 millions in circulation, which had for some time retained the value of about 10½*d.*; and 200 millions had been previously bought up and burnt. But at no time, not even during the invasion of Napoleon, had they fallen to so low as a fifth of their nominal value, or 8*d.* The lowest point was on the return of Napoleon from Elba, when they fell for a short time to 20½ per cent. The greatly extended trade of the country, since that time, would enable the government to put into circulation a much larger amount of paper money, and yet preserve for it a greater exchangeable value, than during the wars of the French revolution. It would be impossible, of course, to do more than offer a conjecture as to the effect of an operation which depends so much upon moral causes. But assuming that the government were supported by the people, as there is every reason to believe it is at present, I do not see that it would be impossible to increase the circulation to 1000

millions of roubles; and making every allowance for the great depreciation of its value, and the loss which the public treasury must suffer from being a receiver as well as payer of money, yet supposing that the increased issue of roubles, beyond the present amount, should only pass on an average from the first hand at a shilling each, instead of 3*s.* 4*d.* their nominal value, the government would raise by the process an amount exceeding 30 millions sterling. And I have not a doubt that this estimate is greatly below the mark; for it must be borne in mind that the hand that controls this paper mint has a great advantage in making the first payments in an irredeemable currency, which does not for a long time, in a country like Russia, find its level of depreciation. Here, then, is a resource which will enable the Russian government to meet the deficits during two more campaigns, so that the expense of three years defensive war on her own soil may be borne with the aid of the bullion and paper of the Bank, without including any of those other resources to which M. Tengoborski alluded, but which he forgot to specify. And it must be borne in mind that we are only dealing with a deficit to be caused by the expenses of the war exceeding the ordinary expenditure, which itself includes, as will be seen by a glance at my table for 1838, a charge of £8,150,000 for the army and £1,500,000 for the navy. The cost of the navy will cease with the inactivity or destruction of the fleets; and it must always be remembered that a country whose wealth and population are in the interior, and whose capitals are inaccessible, can, by falling back

for a time, from the coast towards its resources, limit, to any extent, the expenses of a defensive war.

There are circumstances which render the expedient of a depreciated currency less ruinous to an agricultural people, like the Russians, than to a more wealthy, mercantile, or manufacturing nation, such as England or Holland. The Russians are not lenders, either at home or abroad, and it is the creditor class which suffers from depreciation. Private mortgages are hardly known in Russia; they are all effected at the government loan and deposit banks. To such an extent are these transactions carried, that M. Leon Faucher puts down the liabilities of the government, for floating debt and deposits, payable on demand, at £200,000,000, to which M. Tengoborski makes but a weak objection. In case of a suspension of specie payments, there would, no doubt, be an arrangement for carrying over these engagements. Again, leases are hardly known; and the relations between the proprietor and the occupier of the soil, owing to the serfage of the latter, involve but few pecuniary contracts. The chief transactions of agriculturists, unlike those of traders, are every where confined to one or two seasons of the year. In Russia they take place once a year, and to a large extent at the fairs which are held in all parts of the empire. These are some of the peculiarities which would tend to mitigate the pressure of a depreciation on the population of that country.

On the other hand, where, besides, could a government, with money at its command, find, amongst its own subjects, such a cheap supply of all

that constitutes the main wants of an army? Corn, cattle, coarse woollens, linens, and every article made of leather, are to be had in as great abundance, and especially in the direction of the seat of war in the south of Russia, as in any part of the world. With the exception of sulphur and saltpetre, there is scarcely an article for the commissariat or ordnance department of the army for which it would be necessary to send abroad. For the interest on that part of the public debt held by foreigners, specie would be required. M. Tengoborski informs us that the entire interest of the funded and floating debt of the empire, together with the sinking fund, absorbs only 21½ per cent of its ordinary revenue, "a smaller proportion than in any other of the principal States of Europe, with the exception of Prussia." As, according to the same authority, the ordinary revenue of Russia is 37½ millions, this would give about £8,000,000, for the interest and sinking fund of the debt; but I have no information as to the proportion held by foreigners.

It would be to deceive ourselves were we to assume that the degradation of the standard would involve the country in political anarchy or confusion, or array against the government any great amount of popular discontent. No shock is produced upon a community by a change which is so gradual in its nature that it leaves no man perceptibly poorer to-day than he was yesterday, and which, so far as the process is felt at all, operates to the relief of those who are in debt, a class which, in Russia at least, is both numerous and influential. Nor, so long as she

provides for the payment, in specie, of her foreign creditors, would her rank and standing abroad be compromised by the depreciation of her currency. Look at Austria; courted by the Eastern and Western Powers, the very pivot of European diplomacy; yet, all the while, with scarcely a coin of any kind in circulation throughout her empire, and with her paper money ranging, during the last five years, at from 20 to 50 per cent discount.

No one who does me the honour to peruse these pages will fail to perceive the great and manifold advantages which we have surrendered to our antagonist, by invading his territory. Had he been our assailant, the resources of a depreciated currency would not have availed him, to the extent of a shilling, one mile beyond his own frontiers. Besides, there are few objects for which a people will support their government in the derangement of their standard of value. But the defence of their territory against a foreign enemy is one of these; and we may be sure that the spirit of patriotism which prompted the Dutch, when invaded, to cut their dykes, and the inhabitants of Moscow to give their city to the flames, will rally to the support of the Russian government, if it should resolve upon the desperate expedient—hardly less ruinous in the end than fire or inundation—of flooding the country with inconvertible paper money. Nor should we forget the successful part which this engine of finance has played in the defence of nations. The *assignats* of France undoubtedly enabled its people to beat back from its frontiers the armies of confederated Europe; and,

without the "continental currency" of America, it may well be questioned whether Washington could have kept his levies together. Both these currencies fell to the value of waste paper in the end, but they served the purpose of an inexhaustible gold mine for two or three campaigns.

In the whole of my remarks, which, so far as they apply exclusively to Russia, I have now brought to a close, I have assumed that it is the determination of the Allies not to grant a peace to that power, until they have imposed on her what she considers abject and ignominious terms of submission, the acceptance of which on her part, before she shall have exhausted her powers of resistance, and every means of endurance, would be regarded by the world as a national dishonour. I have, in fact, gone upon the supposition that the sentiments which I have heard so loudly expressed, since the commencement of the war, by persons of all classes in this country, represent the views of our Government. I would not be thought to have entertained the belief that the Russian government and people would subject themselves to such evils and sufferings as have been contemplated, unless in what they considered a life or death struggle.

And now, having probed pretty freely the resources of our opponents, let us glance for a moment at the other side of the question, by adding a very few words on

Our own Position and Prospects.

Were I convinced that a perfect accordance of

opinion existed between the reader and myself, as to the arduous character of the struggle in which the country is embarked, I should deem it but a poor compliment to his sagacity to offer to prove that, before we can achieve those triumphs for which I have given credit to the Allies, and which will still leave undecided the issue of the war, great and long continued sacrifices will be required at our hands. But I will confess—and let it be my excuse for what I am about to say—that I am haunted with the fear that not one in ten thousand of those who talk of humbling Russia on her own soil have appreciated half the difficulties of the task; nay, I doubt whether they have realized in their minds the serious nature of the act of invading that country. On the contrary, I have heard objection taken to the words "the invasion of Russia," as inapplicable to the descent upon the Crimea; and this in the face of the facts that the Allies have destroyed or taken possession of posts extending nearly a thousand miles along her coasts, that they are awaiting only the return of spring to renew the war upon her territory, with an army exceeding in numbers that which gained the battles of Borodino, or Austerlitz; and that the Russians have shewn, by the levy *en masse* of their population, that they consider the fate of their empire as much at stake as they did in their resistance to Napoleon in 1812.

Not only is this an invasion of Russia, but it must surpass all others in history in the cost of men and money necessary for its success; for never before was an army sent 3000 miles by sea, to land in the

territory of the most populous, and, for defensive war, the most powerful military nation of the time, with no prospect of assistance from any part of its population, and compelled to bring all their provisions, even to the forage for their cattle, after them, by sea. When Napoleon entered that country, it formed no part of his calculation to provide for the subsistence of his army, after the successful close of his first campaign; for, once in possession of Moscow, he reckoned on his usual mode of subsisting upon the enemy; and, although he made greater previous provision than was his wont, for the supply of food on the line of march, yet the accounts we have, from eye-witnesses, of the devastations committed in the territories through which he passed, leave no room to doubt how much the army was left to depend on forced requisitions and plunder by the way. But in the present case, from the moment that the French and English soldiers leave their own shores, to step on board the vessel which conveys them to the Crimea, begins that direct money drain for every article of their food, clothing, and transport, from which no conceivable success can relieve the governments at home. Again, when Napoleon set off for his Russian campaign, he knew that all along the line of march, from the Seine to the Niemen, army corps after army corps were ready to fall into his ranks; but what reinforcements await France and England from the countries that lie between them and their great northern foe? True, a few recruits are picked up by the way, at Genoa, but at the expense of something very like a subsidy from our Go-

vernment; and as for the Ally at whose invitation we make this great effort, instead of finding aid of any kind in his dominions, he adds to our burdens by his pecuniary requisitions; and the Western Powers are obliged to enter into a convention for feeding his troops, even on the very borders of the Ottoman empire.

In what page of our history shall we find an expedition to the Continent, undertaken in the midst of disadvantages and difficulties such as these? Not in those early times when our kings laid claim to the sovereignty of France, for then we had at least a foothold in that country; not in the days of Marlborough, whose armies were always disembarked on a friendly shore, either to fight on neutral ground, or with a secure basis of operations on the Continent itself; not in more recent times, when we landed at Walcheren, or Quiberon, or Toulon, for there, at least, we believed the population were ready to espouse our cause; nor when Wellington set sail for the Peninsula, with the full assurance that the Spanish and Portuguese people would eagerly flock to his standard. No, the undertaking in which we have now embarked has no parallel, for magnitude, in the annals of war; and if success is to attend it, to the extent promised us by its advocates, a greater expenditure of life and treasure will be required than was ever poured out in any one military operation; are we, in England, prepared with the quota of men and money which, from month to month, and year to year, we shall be expected to contribute?

And first, of the men. In analysing the resources

of Russia for a defensive war, I did not think it necessary to discuss the question of her ability to find soldiers enough to outnumber (I do not speak of quality) the armies of her enemies, on her own territory. Assuming that that would be taken for granted, as was done by M. Leon Faucher, in the paper to which I have referred, I addressed myself only to the inquiry as to how far she could supply them with pay and subsistence. But an attempt has lately been made by those who labour with such fatal success to depreciate the power of the enemy, and lull us into a false security, to shew that, even in the supply of men, Russia will fall short of her assailants. One moment's reflection upon the state of society in that country ought to have prevented such an attempt upon the credulity of the nation. Russia, by the latest statistical returns, contains 62,000,000 of inhabitants, of whom 5,413,000, only, live in towns, and 56,587,000 constitute the rural population, being, of course, by far the most agricultural people in Europe. But of this small urban population, comprising little more than one-twelfth of the whole, it may safely be said that not much above one-half would be dignified with the attribute of town life in England; for 627 of the towns have less than 10,000 inhabitants each, with an aggregate of 2,400,000 souls, and 188 of these "towns" are put down with a population under 2000: and any one who has travelled in Russia must have observed, what the government tables indeed inform us, that more than six-sevenths of the houses in these so-called towns are built entirely of wood. In fact,

Russia is, as has been already said, a great village. Now, it is precisely in this state of society that not only are men to be found in the greatest numbers capable of enduring the hardships and exposures of a camp life, but where they can be spared with the least inconvenience and loss—I speak in an economical sense only—for the destructive processes of war. I am aware of the sacrifices occasioned to the nobles, by the withdrawal of the serfs from their estates, and of the great expense of conveying them to the scene of hostilities, nor am I losing sight of the repugnance of the peasant to a soldier's life; but the men are there, and, if money and a sufficient motive be not wanting, they will be forthcoming; and, just as recruiting in England is more successful for the militia than the line, because it does not involve the liability to be sent abroad—so, in the same degree, in the present war, will the Russian be reconciled to a service which does not require him to be carried beyond the bounds of the empire. This is one more illustration of the great disadvantages under which we have placed ourselves, by making the territory of Russia our battle field, and which will be more apparent as we turn to the question of the supply of men in our own country.

When M. Kossuth made his first journey through Great Britain, he drew the inference, from the employments of the population, that in case of a war we should find it difficult to recruit our armies. He saw at a glance, what our last census tables had informed us, that a majority of the inhabitants of this island live in towns, and that a much smaller portion

of our people are employed in agriculture than in any other country of Europe. Had he been travelling in Russia, he would, of course, have drawn the directly opposite conclusion, for he is not ignorant that it is from the agricultural class that large moveable armies have always been raised. The reason of this is so obvious that, but for the attempt to draw the opposite conclusion in the present war, I should not have said one word on the subject. There are two obstacles in the way of raising large moveable armies for service in the field among the population of towns, the one physical, and the other economical. Men habituated to in-door life, and who never, perhaps, slept out of a warm and dry bed, however robust they may be, would succumb under the first trials of such exposure and hardships as are inseparable from a camp life. Their whole training is a disqualification for such an ordeal; whilst, on the contrary, the Russian peasant, whom I have seen passing the night with indifference in the open air, with no other covering than his sheep-skin coat, even in the month of October, would suffer very little loss of comfort in exchanging his every-day life for that of the hut, or the cave, in the Crimea.

I have used the term *moveable army*, because I would wish to draw a distinction between the inability to endure the privation of those comforts which habit alone has rendered necessary for the health of the townsman, and the want of spirit, or courage, to perform the part of a combatant. There is no little cant afloat about the enervating effects of towns. Their moral tendency is exactly the reverse. The

most spirited part of the population of every country is always found in its towns. From the time when, to the disgust of old Froissart, the weavers of Ghent routed the chivalry of the 14th century, down to the heroic resistance made, in modern days, by Saragossa, Venice, and Rome, we have innumerable instances where the superior courage of the inhabitants of towns has borne up against every thing but the most overwhelming odds, or famine. We all know that the train-bands of London—even since the metropolis contained more inhabitants than are to be found, in our day, in any other town in the kingdom—ranked amongst the very best fighting men of their time. But we also know that they had a great repugnance to finding themselves further from their beds than Blackheath or Brentford.

But there is another reason why the recruiting sergeant cannot fill the ranks of the army from among our urban population. Man is too precious, and labour too valuable, to be purchased at his price. So vast an accumulation of capital, which would be rendered valueless without the labour to which it is united, is bidding against him, and bidding so high that, unless he raise his terms five or ten-fold, he has no chance of enlisting large armies from among the industrial population of our towns. And the workmen are not only retained by the high value which this fixed capital imparts to their toil, but also by that division of labour which combines them, like the links of a chain, in mutual dependence on each other. If you attempt to break to pieces this social mechanism, by taking away a part here and a part

there, you will do far more injury to it, as a whole, than can be compensated by the value of the portions applied to other uses. No, a manufacturing community is of all others the least adapted for great aggressive military enterprises, like that in which we have embarked. In defending themselves at their own doors, such an industrial organization might afford greater facilities, probably, than any other state of society; for the men being already marshalled (so to speak) in regiments and companies, and known to their employers, the resources of the capitalists, and the services of the labourers, might be brought, with precision and economy, into instant and most extended cooperation. We read that Jack of Newbury (the Gott of his day) led 100 of his clothiers, at his own expense, to Flodden Field: and, if the spirit of patriotism were roused by the attack of a foreign enemy, I have no doubt we should see our great manufacturing capitalists competing for the honour of equipping and paying the greatest number of men, until our shores were freed from the presence of the invader. But I am obliged to pre-suppose an invasion of our own territory, before assuming that all ranks would be roused to take a part in the struggle.

Now, can it be doubted that to subdue Russia to our will, on her own soil, is a task ten times more difficult than it would be to capture any army that could possibly be landed on our shores? And yet, far from seeing all classes press forward, as they would do if the Russians were besieging Portsmouth, there is so great a disinclination to take a personal

share in the war, that, although the bounty has been twice raised, the standard as often lowered, and the time of service shortened, it has been found impossible to fill the ranks of the army or militia. I must be always understood to draw a distinction between the zeal for the war, as displayed in speeches, leading articles, resolutions, and cheers, and that exhibited in the form of solid bone and muscle, which alone will avail us on Russian territory. Nobody denies that, as far as words go, we have carried on the war with vigour. But has it never occurred to those who threaten the enemy with the extremity of humiliation, that, if their menacing language be not followed up by commensurate performances, it may react to our own disadvantage? If, for instance, the *Times*, which will be taken at St. Petersburgh as an exponent of British opinion, tells the Russians that "the only object that we need recognise is to reduce the enemy to the lowest possible condition, and compel him to sue for his very existence," what other effect can it have but to stimulate that nation to greater efforts, from the belief that its very life is at stake, and the apprehension that our exertions to crush its armies in the field will be as formidable as our threats? But if no bolt accompany this thunder,—if the power of England be represented on Russian soil by an army of raw lads, and of them an insufficient number, we not only enhance the difficulties of our own position by this preliminary bluster, but we place our Allies at the same disadvantage, and actually help to raise the prestige of Russian power.

I foresee a possible danger to the alliance in which we are engaged, unless there be found in Parliament a disposition to act up to its duty, and to speak the honest truth to both the government and the people. The government should be called on for a return of the weekly recruitments up to the present time, both for the militia and the line. Let not the stereotyped excuse, that the public service will suffer by the exposure, deter us from knowing the truth. The Russian government knows exactly the state of our army and militia. They have only to consult the pages of those periodicals which are the technical organs of the military profession, to discover the state of the English army. The United Service Magazine has for months held far stronger language than myself upon the subject, and, in its last number, it speaks almost in the accents of despair. If it be found that the recruiting is still as deficient as it was last summer, then, were the Parliament to go on voting men, with the knowledge that they will not be forthcoming by voluntary enlistment, it would make itself a party to a delusion from which nothing but disaster and disgrace can ensue. A frank understanding must be come to upon this vital question between the House of Commons and the people. Hitherto, the British public appear to have regarded the army as an abstraction,—as something which the government and Parliament can provide, from some source apart from themselves. This illusion has been dispelled by putting ourselves in contact, as friend and foe, with the two greatest military empires of the Continent. Let the whole truth be known;

and, happily, the country may renounce the attempt to become a first class military power, and then the danger to our alliance with France will be removed; for we shall cease to resist her more pacific tendencies, by a cry for war so shockingly disproportioned to our ability to carry it on.

If we turn from the subject of men to that of money, we find the advantage so completely on the side of the Allies, that, had the seat of war been anywhere but on the territory of Russia, her financial difficulties would have long since determined the struggle. The expenses already incurred by England, for freight of transports alone, to carry her army and its supplies to the Crimea, exceed what Russia could have met, with ready money payments, in any other way than by resorting to the reserve fund of the Bank, or applying to Western Europe for a loan: and, if I could believe that here, as in Russia, the government and people were thoroughly united as to the object of the war,—that it excited the same spirit of patriotic or religious enthusiasm, or that it involved, in the opinion of the population, the security of the country,—I should not entertain a doubt of the ability and willingness of the nation to bear the burdens which a war expenditure of several years will undoubtedly entail. But it is because I doubt whether any one of these conditions can be fulfilled on our side, that I venture to offer a few words of caution on the financial view of the question.

Every man deserving the name of a statesman, who has given his sanction to the terms which are understood to have been presented to Russia as the

conditions of peace (I mean the dismantling of her forts on the Black Sea, the surrender of territory on the banks of the Danube, and the engagement not to build ships of war in that sea, or any thing like these terms), will have made up his mind to the probable alternative of at least three years continuance of war. But few even of our statesmen have probably realized to themselves the effects of the war on the trade, finances, and population of the country. Upon this great subject, I can do little more, with my limited space, than suggest topics for reflection, in the briefest possible terms.

One of the common arguments for inspiring us with confidence in our resources, is to point to the ease with which Pitt raised money for the great war of the French revolution, when our population and trade were so much less than at present. Nothing can be more fallacious. Far from raising the money with ease, in less than four years, after convulsing repeatedly the commerce of the country with his loans, he was driven to the disgraceful resource of irredeemable bank notes, or a modified national bankruptcy; whilst the people, previously prosperous and happy, were in the third year of the war plunged into such a depth of misery and discontent, that they rose in partial insurrection against the government, and vented their vengeance even on the person of the Sovereign. A great part of the time of Parliament, during the session of 1795, was occupied by measures for mitigating the terrible sufferings of the nation, on the one hand, and averting the natural consequence, rebellion, on the other. Had not the landed

interest been an exception to this state of suffering, the war would not have lasted five years.

And yet the country entered into the war of 1793 with some advantages, as compared with the state of things in our day. The annual charge for the interest and sinking fund of the national debt was then £9,000,000. The interest now payable is £27,000,000. The labour of this generation is contributing, every year, £18,000,000, towards the expenses of the war in which our fathers indulged from 1793 to 1815. We had, moreover, just begun the application of steam power to our manufactures, which, together with the mechanical inventions of Arkwright and others, had given a sudden and great expansion to our trade, and brought fabulous gains to our capitalists. The war, and the revolutions, retarded, for several years, the adoption of these discoveries on the continent, and left us in exclusive possession of that manufacturing system which has since taken root in every country of Europe. Even the capital of the continent, to escape from war exactions, and the alarming political doctrines of the day, took refuge in large amounts in this country, and helped to swell the tide of our manufacturing prosperity. We possessed, at the same time, a monopoly of the commerce of every sea, and of a great part of the earth's surface. Not a ship could sail, whether under an American or European flag, but with our permission, and under the regulations of our government. We had seized upon the colonies of France and Holland, and all the exportable produce of the East and West Indies, and a great part

of the South American continent, were brought to our ports; so that no coffee, sugar, or other colonial articles, or even the raw materials of several of their manufactures, could reach the people of the continent except through this country. We have no longer these exclusive privileges. The right of search, which we enforced against the United States even at the cost of bloodshed, we hastened to renounce at the commencement of the present war; and the ships of that great maritime power, with a tonnage which now more than equals our own, have not only free access to every port of Europe,—not actually closed by an effective blockade—but they share, on equal terms, the commerce of our colonies. Every where, in Europe and America, the manufacturers are maintaining a rivalry with our own, and, excepting in France, all are enjoying the advantages of peace.

Again, we hear people cite the immense increase in the assessment of real property and income; the number of houses; the vast investments in railways, docks, mills, manufactories, mines, &c., as a proof how much more competent we are now, than at any former time, to bear the expenses of war. If we possessed virtue and self-denial sufficient to meet the expenditure of the war out of the annual revenue of the population, these are sources from which it might be obtained, not, certainly, without inconvenience, but without any sudden shock to our industrial interest. But, as it is certain that the money will be now, as it was in the time of Pitt, raised chiefly by loans, it will be almost wholly abstracted from the floating capital of the country, which would other-

wise, in great part, be available for the employment of labour upon reproductive investments. They who fall into the belief that this is an inexhaustible fund, will do well to call to mind the crisis which was caused in our money market, a few years ago, by a great and sudden demand for railways, and the stringency which followed the rapid extension of the Australian trade, to say nothing of the present rate of interest at the very commencement of the war loans.

Dazzled by the visible signs of realized wealth which surround us, we are apt to overrate the resources of the country for any new undertaking; and to calculate, as available for investment, the capital which is already invested. Wars are not carried on with fixed capital, but with that which serves, like the circulating fluid of the human system, as its animating principle. This floating capital, from which all new demands, whether for the support of armies and navies or of railway excavators, must be satisfied, is, probably, larger in positive amount in our day than at any former time; but never before did it bear so small a comparative ratio to the fixed capital of the country; and, consequently, never was the danger so great of inflicting heavy loss upon the capitalists, or such widespread sufferings upon the labourers, by absorbing, for purposes of war, that floating capital without which our mills and furnaces, our steam engines, docks, and railways, become as valueless as if the timber and iron of which they are constructed were still in their native mines or forests; and, deprived of which, our

millions of skilled labourers would be as destitute, in the midst of all this fixed capital, as if it had no existence. These are but trite truisms; but I am afraid there is much misapprehension abroad on the subject, which a few years experience may painfully dispel.

We cannot too fully realise to our minds the effects of a succession of loans in London, Paris,* and other

* I have, for obvious reasons, avoided all allusion to the resources of our great Ally. If I had published, on my own authority, the financial statement of which I am about to give a summary, I should have been accused of laying bare the weak side of a friend to the eye of the enemy. Now, nothing can be more infantile than the notion that any thing of this kind is concealed from the Russian Government. There is not a fact or conjecture respecting the finances of France, that has not been passed in review in St. Petersburgh, where everything connected with the resources of the Allies, in men and money, is as well known as in Paris or London. In a number of the Brussels paper, *Le Télégraphe*, appeared a communication, dated Paris, Dec. 10, giving a very detailed account of the ways and means of the French Government, for its extraordinary budget of the next year. The last loan was for 750,000,000 francs (30 millions sterling), 10 per cent paid down, and the rest payable in eighteen monthly instalments; of which there remain 521 millions to be paid, in the thirteen months from December 1855 to December 1856, inclusive. This amount, says the writer, is already anticipated in the expenses of the war, and he assumes that a loan of at least 750 millions (£30,000,000) will be required in April; and, assuming that it will be payable in the same manner as the last, 383 million francs will be required within the year. In addition, he puts down 120 millions for calls falling due on railways in 1856, and 400 millions for the purchase of foreign corn to make up for the deficiency in the harvest, and then the account stands thus:—

great money markets in Western Europe, such as are inevitable if the war continue for three years longer. Already, the Russians have put forth their terms for eight millions sterling. Before May, France and England will certainly require loans of twenty-five millions each. Sardinia is announced as a borrower; and the same reasons which justified the last guarantee of a Turkish loan will warrant another. To say

	francs.
Instalments of the old loan payable during the next year	521,000,000
„ payable on new loan . .	383,000,000
	904,000,000
Calls on railways	120,000,000
For purchases of foreign corn .	400,000,000
Total liability for extraordinaries .	1424,000,000

To meet these extraordinary calls he puts down, first, the savings of the country, which are estimated by the best authorities at twenty million francs a month; and next, the proportion of the precious metals which the balance of trade ordinarily brings to France, at two hundred and twenty million francs:—

	francs.
Savings, twenty millions a month for thirteen months	260,000,000
Share of precious metals . .	220,000,000
	480,000,000
Leaving unprovided . .	944,000,000
or nearly	£38,000,000

to come out of former savings, already very much exhausted by previous loans and speculations.

nothing of the rumours afloat respecting Sweden, Portugal, and other states, here is the pretty certain prospect of from sixty to seventy millions being required for war-loans, besides the other demands for the completion of great public works. It cannot be doubted that this must have the effect of sensibly diminishing the amount of floating capital in those three or four countries from which the supply is drawn. But war, although the greatest of consumers, not only produces nothing in return, but, by abstracting labour from productive employment and interrupting the course of trade, it impedes, in a variety of indirect ways, the creation of wealth; and, should hostilities be continued for a series of years, each successive war-loan will be felt in our commercial and manufacturing districts with an augmented pressure. The interest of money, that is to say the value of floating capital, will rise, whilst that of nearly all kinds of fixed capital, as well as of labour, will decline. Instead of 6 per cent discount on first class securities, they will be charged 7, 8, and 10 per cent. The fatal effects of this state of things will fall, in the first place, on those who depend on credit for the means of carrying on their trade. In the last great war, the usury laws, however unsound in a natural state of commerce, were, to some extent, a shield to the weak against extortion, during the violent fluctuations of the money market; for, although they were often evaded, under the charges for premium, commission, &c., yet the Bank of England, never rising above the legal rate, guaranteed an equality to a large portion of the trading community.

But these laws being no longer in force, the rate of interest will rise, instantly, upon the needy trader, in proportion to his necessities, and precipitate his fall.

Then will arise from among the commercial class, as there did within three years of the commencement of the war of 1793, a cry for a relaxation of the currency laws, and for a larger issue of bank notes; and I have no doubt that, if the war goes on, those modern alchemists who believe they have discovered the universal menstruum in a few square inches of paper, will be indulged with their panacea of one pound notes. The effect of this will be to release our sovereigns from the functions of currency, and convert them into capital, to be sent abroad to pay the expenses of the war—an act resembling too much that of the thriftless artisan who parts with the tools of his trade. If the currency be kept at the same level as the gold would have been, there will be no relief to the debtor class. If it be depreciated by excessive issues of paper, the foreigner will fix us to some honest standard of his own, at Hamburgh or Amsterdam, and leave us to the amusement of robbing one another. In that case, I need not point out the very great difference between such a measure here, with our infinite number of engagements, mortgages, and investments, at home and abroad, and in an agricultural country like Russia.

Should we witness such a state of things, of which there can be no doubt if the war be carried on sufficiently long "with vigour," the effects upon the working population would be felt to an extent, and

with an intensity, of which past experience of their sufferings affords no example; for the evil will be in proportion to the numbers and density of our manufacturing community, which have attained dimensions that have no parallel in history. I forbear to speculate on all the consequences which might follow from the disorganization of this industrial population, and the more so because, as they will be the last to suffer from loss of occupation, I will not abandon the hope that the war may terminate before its calamities fall upon them. Happily, this vast social machinery is not without its safety valve, for the assurance of those timid persons who live in dread of its explosive energies. It is the interest of employers, having large amounts invested in fixed capitals, to continue to employ their work-people, long after those investments cease to be profitable. I know instances in which mill-owners, whilst hoping for better times, have preferred to work on at a loss of several thousand pounds a-year of their floating capital, rather than, by closing their establishments, to incur far greater sacrifices from the total unproductiveness of their buildings, machinery, labourers' cottages, and all that constitutes their fixed capital; to say nothing of the disadvantage of withdrawing from the market, and losing their connexions and customers. There is an honourable pride, too, amongst the tall chimnies, not without its use, which disinclines them to be the first to cease to smoke. It follows, however, that mischief may be insidiously working when all is apparent prosperity; and this very disposition to prolong the struggle might, under

a continued pressure of adverse circumstances, render the ultimate catastrophe only the more sudden and calamitous.

Hitherto the effects of the war have been felt by the working class, not in the form of loss of employment, but through the high price of food, which has told with great severity on the unskilled labourer, receiving the lowest rate of wages. The most numerous of this class, the agricultural labourers—that mute and helpless multitude who have never made their voice heard in the din of politics, or their presence felt in any social movement—are the greatest sufferers. We have a school of sentimentalists who tell us that war is to elevate man in his native dignity, to depress the money power, put down mammon worship, and the like. Let them take a rural walk (they require bracing) on the downs, or the weald, or the fens, in any part of this island south of the Trent, and they will find the wages of agricultural labourers averaging, at this moment, under twelve shillings a week; let them ask how a family of five persons, which is below *their* average, can live with bread at 2½*d* a lb. Nobody can tell. But follow the labourer, as he lays down his spade, or mattock, and settles to his dinner, in the nearest barn or shed, and peep into his wallet; or drop in at his cottage at 12 o'clock, and inquire what the family dinner consists of:—bread, rarely anything better, and not always enough of that; with nothing left out of his earnings for tea, or sugar, or soap, or candles, or clothes, or the schooling of his children, and with his next year's harvest money already

mortgaged for shoes. And this is the fate of millions, living at our very doors, who constitute the vast majority of the "agriculturists," of whose great prosperity we now hear so much. Never within the recollection of living man was the farm labourer's condition so bad as at present. During the last great war, he went straight to the parish board for the "allowance" of 2*s* 6*d* a head for each child exceeding two; so that with his wages at 14*s*, if he had five children, his income was raised to upwards of a guinea a week. This might have been unsound political economy, but it stood between the labourer and starvation during the long French war. My indictment against war is that it brutalizes the masses, and makes the rich richer and the poor poorer, but never were these evil tendencies developing themselves with such unrelenting pressure as now that the old poor law and the usury laws no longer exist.

I know it has been stated by some, who, it is a stretch of charity to believe, speak in ignorance, that the high price of bread does not arise from the blockade of the Russian ports. But not only does the war cause the rise of price in this market, but throughout the continent, and over a great part of the world. It is in the order of God's providence that the almost illimitable productive powers of the southern plains of Russia should have been reserved for the supply of food for the densely peopled countries of Western Europe. We have deemed it politically expedient to blockade the Don, the Dnieper, and the other outlets for that region of "Black

Earth" whose fertility has excited the amazement of geologists, and from which the sustenance of half Europe might, with proportionate labour and capital, be drawn. But nature's laws do not bend to the caprice of diplomatists or statesmen. In 1853, the year before the war, between five and six millions of quarters of grain were exported from Russia to Western Europe. The sudden cessation of this supply has carried sorrow and suffering into the abodes of poverty, in England, Holland, Switzerland, and every other manufacturing and commercial country of Europe. Nor can this state of things be changed, so long as the war continues, for it is the natural and normal state of Western Europe to depend, for a portion of its food, upon the produce of the Eastern portion of the Continent. We have, for the last year, had a higher average price of wheat than for the last thirty years—higher considerably than in 1847, the year of the Irish famine, when such enormous supplies reached us from Russia; and this notwithstanding that last year's crop in this country was unprecedentedly large, and that the late harvest is considered, by competent judges, to have been almost equal to an average. What, then, would be the effect on prices in our market, if, whilst the supplies from the Baltic and the Black Sea were still intercepted by the blockade, one of those really bad harvests, of which we have all known so many, were to recur?

I have thus endeavoured to point out the great obstacles it will be necessary to surmount, and the sacrifices we shall be called on to endure, if we per-

severe in the attempt to humble Russia on her own territory. Nor do I conceal my desire to awaken the nation from what I cannot but consider its dream of confidence as to the result,—a confidence which, with better opportunities than the majority of my countrymen for forming a judgment, I confess I do not share. In saying so, I am aware that I am opposing the present current of public feeling; but where is the man of sense, courage, and honesty, who will deliberately say that the truth ought not to be spoken, because it does not flatter the preconceived impressions of the hour? That I, at least, believe—sincerely and earnestly believe—in the truth of the views I have expressed may be credited, in the absence of any accusation of sinister motives, when I add that these pages have been penned with the conviction that they would bring no present popularity to the writer, but, on the contrary, entail on him no little abuse and misrepresentation.

One word before concluding. I have been asked, by those who have the right to make such an inquiry, what course I should take if, without reference to the past, I were from this moment responsible for the policy of the country. I have no hesitation in answering this question; and, to be still more practical and unreserved, I will place myself, *but merely for the sake of argument*, in the position of the present Government, and assume, for the moment, the responsibility of their objects and antecedents.

1.—I would seek, above all things, to withdraw every British soldier from Russian territory, the invasion of which was a heedless blunder, both in a

political and strategical point of view. I mean a blunder in those who still would have carried on the war in other directions. Our army may now be brought away without further loss or discredit. It may not always be so. Russia has been, to all former invaders, the grave or prison of armies, dynasties, and even of empires.

2.—With regard to the terms of peace, I should attach no value whatever to the promises of Russia, as a guarantee for the future, the very word guarantee implying that you obtain other security for the performance of a contract on the part of one whose good faith, or competency, you mistrust. We are now at war because Russia would not agree, at the Vienna Conference, to sign a parchment promise not to maintain more than four line-of-battle ships, and a proportionate number of frigates and transports, in the Black Sea.

The terms which are now tendered to Russia are of an analogous character: calling on her to promise not to do certain acts in her own waters, or on her own territory. Yet we are told, at the same time, through the very organ of the prime minister which announces these terms, that the Russian Government is "free from the ties of truth and principle, usually binding on nations." But although we believe these promises, if obtained, would not be worth the parchment on which they are written, yet Russia will refuse them with a pertinacity greater and more enduring than probably any terms we could have demanded. It is considered a point of honour in a great empire not to consent to an invasion of the

right of sovereignty in its own territory. Diminutive Greece may submit to a Pacifico outrage, and, by a pathetic appeal to the principles of justice, gain a moral triumph, in the world's opinion, over our dozen line-of-battle ships. But a first class power would be dishonoured in submitting to any humiliation of the kind, until after its powers of resistance and endurance were completely exhausted. There could, perhaps, be nothing devised which would lead to a longer struggle, than were England and France to attempt to force America to sign a treaty, binding herself not to keep more than four line-of-battle ships in the Gulf of Mexico; and yet she has only one such vessel in commission, and is not likely to have more. We have, therefore, hit upon terms which involve the maximum of resistance before they will be yielded, and the minimum of advantage when obtained. I would abandon such a policy as repugnant to reason.—What course, then, should I pursue?

3.—I should recur to the policy which our Government adopted at the outset of the negotiations, when they turned to Germany and Austria, as most nearly concerned in the danger, and the only countries which could obstruct the march of Russia westward; for if they leave the door open, it is in vain for us to try to close it. Now, the geography of Europe has not changed since the first negotiations at Vienna. If Germany and Austria occupied an important position then, they are relatively more powerful now, inasmuch as the other powers are weakened by war; and if hostilities go on for a year

or two, and they remain at peace, their relative weight in the European scale will be still more increased. We must discard the idea that Austria, Prussia, or Germany will join us in the present war. It has been a sad reproach to our sagacity that for eighteen months,—since the retreat of the Russians from the Danube began,—we have been deluding ourselves with the notion that those countries, whose interests are on that river, would follow us in our invasion of the Crimea. When the Duke of Newcastle wrote his celebrated despatch to Lord Raglan, on the 29th of June, 1854, recommending in these terms the expedition to the Crimea—"the retreat of the Russian army across the Danube, and the anticipated evacuation of the Principalities, *have given a new character to the war*, and will render it necessary for you without delay, &c."—he and the Cabinet must have known that this retreat of the Russians from Silistria, and their return across the Pruth, were steps taken by the Russian Government to conciliate Austria; and, that, from that moment (as stated by Lord John Russell in his despatch from Vienna, 16 April, 1855), we could no longer count upon her, as an active participator in the war.

But Austria and Germany, although they are too wise and selfish to follow us to the Crimea, where their interests do not, as they think, beckon them, are yet, with regard to all the *future* objects of the war, as completely identified with us as when our government summoned them to the first conferences. In fact they occupy, for the future, the diplomatic ground we wished them to take from the

first. Austria has a treaty with Turkey, binding herself to make the invasion of the Principalities a *casus belli* against Russia. Prussia and Austria have a treaty, making it also an act of war against them if Russia pass the Balkan; and Prussia and Germany have engaged to defend Austria, if she should be attacked by Russia. Here we have these powers committed to the object we profess to have in view,—not exactly in our way: a little more complex, and somewhat slower in execution: but still, substantially, nearly all we want. But more important still, at the close of the last Vienna Conferences, Austria offered to enter into a tripartite treaty with France and England, binding herself by a positive engagement, (which she never proffered to do before), to resist, in future, any attack made by Russia upon Turkey, or any attempt to maintain an exaggerated naval force in the Black Sea; and it was this offer, I have no doubt, made at the very close of the negotiations, which converted M. Drouyn de Lhuys and Lord John Russell to the cause of peace. Now, here are grounds for believing that, for the *future*, Germany may be reckoned upon by Western Europe, as a bulwark against Russian aggression. It is thither that I should direct my diplomacy, if I were in the position of our Government, and shared their fears for the safety of Europe. Let them try to condense the various and complicated engagements to which I have alluded, into one simple treaty of the whole of Germany. There may be a difficulty in convincing its governments, or people, of the reality of the danger which so alarms us. Hitherto, I be-

lieve, the Teutonic family have been in no fear of being absorbed by the Sclavonic race. Their traditions and experience point towards France, rather than Russia, as a source of danger. *Their defensive fortifications are on the Rhine, not the Niemen.* But let our government point out to this intelligent people the grounds of their alarm, and, if they be deemed well-founded, there is quite as much love of "fatherland" to reckon upon for repelling an invasion in Germany as in any part of Europe.

4.—But we talk of this as a war which affects the interests of all Europe; and we hear the phrases "Balance of Power" and "International Law" frequently repeated, as though we were enforcing the edicts of some constituted authority. For a century and a half we have been fighting, with occasional intermissions, for the Balance of Power, but I do not remember that it has ever been made the subject of peaceful diplomacy, with a view to the organization of the whole of Europe. Now, if such a pact or federation of the States of Europe as is implied by the phrases "Balance of Power" or "International Law" should ever be framed, it must be the work of peace, and not of war. In the present case, our government has entered into war on the assumption that the European Balance has been, and still is, endangered by the ambition of Russia. Has the rest of Europe ever been, as a whole, consulted in a time of peace, and in a deliberate manner, upon this danger, and invited to take a part in averting it? If not, what shall we say of our government, or our governing class, or diplomacy in general? Now,

assuming again that I occupied the position of our government, and were in earnest in my fears for Europe, and attached a real meaning to those phrases just quoted, I should appeal not only to Germany, but to all the States, small as well as great, of the Continent, for such a union as would prevent the possibility of any act of hostility from the common enemy. This is the work of peace; and to this end, with the views and responsibilities of the government, I should address myself. If I found that I failed to impart my apprehensions to the other nations of Europe,—if they declined to form part of a league, or confederation against Russian encroachments, I should be disposed to reconsider my own views on the subject, and to doubt whether I might not have been led away by an exaggerated alarm. In that case, at least, I would forego the quixotic mission of fighting for the liberties of Europe, and pursue a policy more just towards the interests, and more consistent with the prosperity, of the people whose welfare I was more especially charged to promote.

Finally.—Not to incur the charge of vagueness, I would not risk the life of an Englishman, or spend another shilling, for the chance of the barren triumph of extorting pacific pledges from the Russian government; and having come to this determination, there would no longer be an obstacle to peace. But, whilst attaching no value to the limitation of the number of Russian ships, exclusively, I should not lose sight of the policy of dealing with the amount of naval force as an European question. England and France will find themselves with more powerful navies at

the close of the war, than were ever before possessed by two allied powers, a state of things from which embarrassments may possibly arise in more than one direction. This naval armament has already roused the susceptibilities of the United States, and led to an augmentation of their navy. Hitherto that country has not entered into rivalry with the States of Europe, in their military and naval establishments. But, impelled by feelings of insecurity, or pride, the public sentiment appears to be undergoing a change, as regards the navy. Should this spirit acquire strength in the mind of the nation, and reconcile it to the expense, there is no country in the world that in the course of a few years would be their equal at sea. Little more than twenty years hence their population will reach fifty millions, and their wealth is increasing in a far more rapid ratio. Is it wise on the part of the nations of the old world, placed at such a disadvantage by their colossal debts, and the necessities they are under for keeping large standing armies, to fasten on themselves a hostile naval rivalry with this transatlantic people? To abate such an impolitic provocation, as well as in the interests of European peace and prosperity, I would endeavour to promote a general reduction of naval establishments at the close of the war. Russia has been sometimes cited, heretofore, as an obstacle to such a policy; but after the abortive, nay, ridiculous exhibition which her huge navies have afforded to the world, during the present war: the utter want of confidence and enterprise displayed by them, from the moment that a hostile force appeared on her coasts;

and which has more than justified the prediction that in six months she would, in case of a war with England, or any other maritime nation, be "crumpled up" as a naval power: after such proofs of the folly of attempting to become a first class power at sea, without the possession of a mercantile marine, the government of Russia would, I should expect, be the first to embrace an honourable pretence for voluntarily limiting her naval armament within the most moderate and economical dimensions.

I should endeavour, then, on the advent of peace, to promote, as far as possible, an approximation on the part of the European powers to the naval standard of the United States,—the country possessing the greatest amount of mercantile tonnage. Should the close of the war be signalized by such a general reduction of warlike armaments in Europe as would be involved in this arrangement, it would in all human probability confer a lasting benefit on posterity; and amidst the crimes and errors of the last two years, diplomacy might fairly claim for such a peaceful triumph the respect and gratitude of mankind.

THE THREE PANICS:

An Historical Episode.

NOTE.

THE last of the series of pamphlets which emanated from the pen of Mr. Cobden, at intervals during a period of twenty-five years, was published in 1862—six editions in all being issued from the press. No exposure of the humiliating and groundless panics by which the peace of two great nations was almost periodically threatened, and a wise and economic system of naval administration rendered impossible, could have been rendered more complete or more irrefragable. Based as many of its facts and figures were upon the full and accurate information to which Mr. Cobden had access during his somewhat protracted residence in France, as the negotiator of the commercial treaty, he occupied ground which was simply unassailable. A French translation was published in Paris under the auspices of his friend M. Chevalier, the eminent political economist, who has done so much to promote a free trade policy in his own country. Mr. Cobden was strongly convinced that if the English and French Governments met each other in the spirit which characterised the negotiations in which he bore so conspicuous a part, a mutually satisfactory arrangement might be entered into for putting an end to that mischievous rivalry of armaments which has been the bane of the two countries. His views were embodied in the Appendix to this pamphlet;

"and although the voice and the pen of this "international man" can no longer speak to the world, to whose service his life was given, who will say that this great idea will not one day take root?

Years.	Expenditure of the English and French Navies, from 1835 to 1859 inclusive.		Expenditure for Wages in the English and French Dockyards during the same period.		Number of Seamen maintained in the two Navies.		Number of Vessels in Commission in the French Navy.	Years.
	English.	French.	English.	French.	English.	French.		
1835	4,245,723	2,227,709	376,377	343,032	26,041	16,628	165	1835
1836	4,533,543	2,439,445	373,996	358,664	30,195	21,685	171	1836
1837	4,788,761	2,351,949	472,870	264,508	31,289	23,812	186	1837
1838	4,811,990	2,567,092	474,943	276,752	32,028	24,500	198	1838
1839	5,197,511	2,790,921	495,489	314,593	34,857	25,457	218	1839
1840	5,824,074	3,540,058	557,053	384,197	37,665	33,107	228	1840
1841	6,805,351	4,542,495	610,007	436,368	41,389	40,171	227	1841
1842	6,818,173	4,665,617	607,008	481,656	43,105	36,416	225	1842
1843	6,382,990	3,624,929	629,441	410,761	40,229	31,345	213	1843
1844	6,250,120	3,888,121	691,184	358,271	38,343	30,240	219	1844
1845	6,943,720	3,847,498	732,625	369,772	40,084	28,979	233	1845
1846	7,803,465	4,507,427	796,147	436,243	43,314	33,970	243	1846
1847	8,013,873	5,145,900	853,574	448,333	44,969	32,169	240	1847
1848	7,922,287	4,985,872	890,626	444,085	43,978	28,760	242	1848
1849	6,942,397	3,923,276	805,507	456,155	39,535	27,063	211	1849
1850	6,437,883	3,406,866	726,956	432,837	39,093	24,679	181	1850
1851	5,849,917	3,293,737	712,372	416,773	38,957	22,316	166	1851
1852	6,625,944	3,462,271	702,260	425,811	40,451	25,016	175	1852
1853	6,640,596	3,967,838	719,214	467,898	45,885	28,513	192	1853
1854	12,182,769	7,115,417	968,608	688,418	61,457	48,812	254	1854
1855	19,014,708	8,702,758	1,172,800	830,570	67,791	54,479	322	1355
1856	16,013,995	8,330,690	1,301,077	776,356	60,659	40,882	310	1856
1857	10,390,000	5,070,304	937,773	636,776	53,919	29,289	215	1857
1858	10,029,047	5,337,060	991,592	640,954	55,883	29,602	199	1858
1859	11,072,243	8,333,933	1,582,112	772,931	72,400	38,470	300	1859*

* The year of the war in Italy.

THE THREE PANICS.

THE FIRST PANIC.

1847—1848.

As the question involved throughout these pages turns mainly upon the comparative strength of the English and French navies, the reader's attention will be frequently solicited to the preceding tables of naval expenditure, etc., in the two countries. They comprise:—

1. Accounts, in parallel columns, of the total yearly expenditure on the English and French navies, for the twenty-five years from 1835 to 1859.

2. Accounts of the expenditure, during the same period, for wages in the English and French dock-yards.

3. Lists of the numbers of seamen maintained in the two navies in each year for the same time.

There is also a list of the number of vessels in commission in each year during the same period in the French navy, for which there is no parallel list available in the English accounts.

It should be understood, however, that a comparison of the total expenditure in the two countries, *for any one year*, would be a very unfair test of the cost or strength of their respective navies. There are several very large items charged in the British navy estimates, as, for instance, the half-pay and

pensions, which are found under other heads in the finance accounts of France. On the contrary, there are some smaller sums charged to the navy in France, which come under other categories of expenditure in England. The chief use of this table is to furnish an unbroken comparison of the *progress* of expenditure in the two countries during a series of years; and, with this view, the accounts of the Ministry of the Colonies, in which some changes have taken place to break the continuity, have been omitted.

For comparing the naval expenditure of the two countries for any one year, especially in what a French writer has called the "aggressive" outlay, a more accurate test is afforded by the second table, giving the amounts expended for wages in their respective dockyards.

But the truest comparison of the strength or cost of the two navies, in any given year, is afforded by the numbers of the seamen. The official representatives of the Admiralty in the House of Commons have always laid down the rule, that the vote for men is decisive of the whole amount of expenditure. In the words of the highest authority of our day: "It has been well ascertained with respect to the naval branch, and still more with respect to the other branches of our defensive force, that the number of men rules the amount of money voted on all the other branches of the various estimates."* Again, in a Report laid before Parliament, on the "Comparative State of the Navies of England and

* Sir James Graham, *Hansard*, cxxiv. 312.

France,"* to which further allusion will be made, it is stated: "But as, in the case of the Army Estimates, nearly every vote is affected by the number of men; so, in the Navy Estimates, it will be found that almost every vote is influenced by the same consideration; as an increase in the number of seamen involves a corresponding increase in the force of ships, in the expense of bringing them forward and fitting them for service, and providing for wear and tear."

Before proceeding, it may be well to meet an objection. It has been said in the House of Commons,† that the French public accounts are unreliable. That the *estimates* of the expenditure for the different ministerial departments are less reliable in France than in this country, is universally admitted. This arises from two causes: the facility with which supplementary credits have been granted by the Executive—a privilege which has recently been renounced by the Emperor; and from the circumstance that the Estimates are prepared a year in advance of ours. For instance, our Navy Estimates for 1862 are prepared in December 1861, while in France the same progress is going on for 1863. Hence, when the war between France and Austria broke out, in the spring of 1859, as the navy expenditure for that year had been fixed in December 1857, it followed necessarily that all the extra expenses for that war had to be met by supplementary credits.

But it must not be inferred that no record is kept of those supplementary expenses. Every *franc* is

* *Par. Pap.*—182,—1859. † Mr. Bentinck, *Hansard*, clxi. 1765.

inserted in the *Bulletin des Lois*, and afterwards appears in the *Réglement définitif des Budgets*. Each item is allocated to the various ministries, and the *Compte Général des Finances* comprises absolutely every one of those items. Had it not been so, how could M. Fould, in his late programme, have exhibited the exact amount of the difference between the estimates and the expenditure over a long series of years? Ought not the recent unfavourable *exposé* of French finance to satisfy the most sceptical that those in power have not the unchecked control of the public accounts?

The system of public accounts in France is the most exact in principle, and the most rigidly sustained in practice, in the whole world; and, as the Auditors (*La Cour des Comptes*) are irremovable judges, an error or a fraud is all but impossible. But it requires a delay of more than a year to obtain the audited accounts, and hence the above tables are only brought down to 1859.

There is one other point requiring a preliminary observation. It might be supposed, from the tone frequently assumed by our officials, when speaking in the House on the subject of the Navy of France, and from the pretended revelations which sometimes appear in a portion of the public press, that the government of that country is in the habit of taking sudden and secret resolutions respecting its naval armaments. So far is this from being the case, that every body acquainted with the subject knows that the French are far more open than ourselves in discussing and defining, publicly, beforehand, the

amount and character of their naval force. With us, the inquiries of Committees of Parliament, or Royal Commissions, are confined to the details of administration; they are restrained from considering and pronouncing an opinion on the *amount* of force to be kept up, on the plea that that is the prerogative of the Sovereign, to be exercised on the responsibility of the Cabinet. Not so in France, where Commissions, appointed by the Chambers or the Crown, discuss the future strength and organisation of the Navy for many years to come; and the result of their deliberations, with their recommendations, is published to the world.

It must not, however, be supposed that these plans are always carried to completion, for no country, perhaps, produces a greater number of abortive paper projects than France; but the government more frequently falls short of than exceeds the recommendations of the Committees. For instance, at the present moment, the French government is regulating its expenditure, under the chief heads of its Naval Budget, by an Imperial decree of 1857, issued in consequence of the report of a Special Commission, appointed in 1855, and which fixed the outlay for fourteen years; but it is certain that new discoveries in naval architecture, if not the state of the finances, will lead to a modification of this programme.

There is something very puerile in the recent attempts to frighten the country with stories about secret preparations in the French dockyards. It would be just as possible to build a great hotel in secrecy in Paris, as to conceal the process of con-

structing a ship of war at Toulon or Cherbourg. Such tactics on the part of the alarmists are novel, and not complimentary to the intelligence of the public. The subject was treated with greater candour formerly. In introducing the Navy Estimates in 1839, Mr. Wood (now Sir Charles Wood),* the Secretary of the Admiralty, said:—"The French annual estimates contain the fullest information. The French carry publicity to a fault. They carry it, as Sir John Barrow has mentioned in his late life of Lord Anson, to their own detriment. There is no disguise about the state of their navy."†

In comparing the expenditure of the two countries, it will be observed that they almost invariably rise and fall together. In the long run, this must be the case, because it has always been the recognised policy of the governments to preserve a certain relation to each other. Looking back for nearly a century, we shall find that, in a time of peace, France has been accustomed to maintain a naval force not greatly varying from the proportion of two-thirds of our own. If, however, we turn to the tables in the first page, we shall find that in 1840-41 this proportion underwent a great and sudden derangement, and that, instead of being content with two-thirds of our force, the French navy approached almost to an equality with our own. Though remotely antecedent, this incident is not wholly unconnected with the first panic.

It was under these circumstances that Sir Robert Peel's government was formed in 1841. The ear-

* [Created Viscount Halifax in 1866.]

† *Hansard*, vol. xiv. 1219.

liest utterances of that statesman, in the House of Commons, when at the head of a large conservative majority, indicated the line of policy which he was desirous of pursuing. "Is not the time come," said he, "when the powerful countries of Europe should reduce those military armaments which they have so sedulously raised? Is not the time come, when they should be prepared to declare that there is no use in such overgrown establishments? What is the advantage of one power greatly increasing its army and navy? Does it not see that other powers will follow its example? The consequence of this must be, that no increase of relative strength will accrue to any one power; but there must be a universal consumption of the resources of every country in military preparations. They are, in fact, depriving peace of half its advantages, and anticipating the energies of war whenever they may be required." And he thus proceeded to indicate a practical policy to the civilized world. "The true interest of Europe is to come to some one common accord, so as to enable every country to reduce those military armaments which belong to a state of war rather than of peace. I do wish that the councils of every country (or that the public voice and mind, if the councils did not) would willingly propagate such a doctrine."*

The more than official earnestness of these remarks leaves no room to doubt that the speaker yearned for the opportunity of carrying into effect his peaceful and cosmopolitan policy. But the relations of England and France were, at that moment, peculiarly

* *Hansard*, vol. lix. pp. 403-4.

unfavourable to his views. During the previous year, whilst his political opponents were still in power, and when M. Thiers was at the head of the French government, the great diplomatic rupture had occurred between the two governments on the Eastern question—the effects of which have descended in increased armaments to the present time. Two rival statesmen, who wielded with consummate skill the combative pride and the soaring vanity of these great nations, had encountered each other on the shores of Syria, where France was especially sensitive to defeat and loss of influence. The consequence was a deep popular irritation and sense of humiliation throughout the French nation.

It was under such circumstances that these two statesmen, passing from office into opposition, became, from 1841, the persistent advocates, in their respective countries, of a policy that led to constant increase of armaments. The genius of both belonged less to the present than to the past. The one revelled in the historical glories of the first Empire: exulted in being the author of the fortifications of Paris: talked of 800,000 soldiers for a peace establishment; and forced upon successive governments an increase of the navy. The other inherited the traditions of Pitt: saw in our great neighbour only the aggressive and warlike foe of our fathers; and urged on the vexed and unwilling ear of Sir Robert Peel the construction of fortifications, the augmentation of the navy, and the reorganization of the Militia.* The following extract from a speech, delivered July 30, 1845, might almost be taken for the utterance of 1860:—

* Vide, post, p. 242.

"Now, Sir, France, as I had occasion to state on a former occasion, has now a standing army of 340,000 men, fully equipped, including a large force of cavalry and artillery, and, in addition to that, 1,000,000 of the National Guard. I know that the National Guard of Paris consists of 100,000 men, trained, disciplined, reviewed, clothed, equipped, and accustomed to duty, and perfectly competent, therefore, to take the internal duty of the country, and to set free the whole of the regular force. Now, Sir, if France were a country separated from our own by an impassable barrier; if she had no navy; or if the Channel could not be crossed, I should say that this was a matter with which we had no concern. But that is not the case. In the first place, France has a fleet equal to ours. I do not speak of the number of vessels actually in existence, but of the fleet in commission and half-commission, in both which respects the fleet of France is equal to that of this country. But, again, the Channel is no longer a barrier. Steam-navigation has rendered that which was before impassable by a military force nothing more than a river passable by a steam bridge."*

These accents of mistrust and defiance were echoed from the Tribune of the Chamber of Deputies in the following year, when M. Guizot was compelled by his active and brilliant opponent to enlarge his project for increasing the navy:—"We pay England," said M. Thiers, "the compliment of thinking only of her when determining our naval force; we never heed the ships which sally forth from Trieste or Venice;

* Lord Palmerston, *Hansard*, lxxxii. 1223.

we care only for those which leave Portsmouth or Plymouth."*

Although we have been in the habit of assuming, for the last ten years, that our naval ascendancy has been endangered by the policy of the successor of Louis Philippe, it was during the last eight years of that king's reign, and especially for a year or two subsequent to the Syrian dispute, that a serious effort seemed really to be made to rival us at sea. The vast projects for extending the dockyards of France, especially Toulon, arose out of this diplomatic rupture. It seemed as though the government of that country sought to console the nation for the wounds which had been inflicted on its self-love, by enormous and costly preparations for future wars. But, since nobody now believes that the "Citizen King,"—the "Napoleon of Peace," ever contemplated a descent on our shores, it would be a waste of time to enter into lengthened details respecting the first panic, which terminated with his downfall. Some of the incidents which preceded that event have, however, exercised so much influence on the two succeeding panics, that they cannot be altogether passed over without notice.

At the time to which we are now more particularly referring (1845-6), the first of these great political delusions had acquired no hold on the public mind. The principal contribution to the first panic, previous to the publication of the Duke of Wellington's letter, was the pamphlet of Prince Joinville. It is difficult now, after a calm perusal of this tract, to understand

* Chamber of Deputies, 1846.

how it could have been pressed into the service of the alarmists. It is filled throughout with complaints of the inferiority of the French navy, and offers not a few, probably unmerited, compliments to the superior management of England. Here are its concluding words:—"I have been obliged, in the whole course of this little pamphlet, to make my country undergo an afflicting comparison with a country that is advanced so much before it in the knowledge of its interests; I have been obliged to expose the secret of our weakness compared to the greatness of British power; but I should think myself happy if, by the sincere avowal of those sorrowful truths, I were able to dissipate the illusion, in which are so many clever persons, as to the real condition of the navy of France, and to decide them to ask with me those salutary reforms which alone can give our navy a new era of power and glory."

The feelings of irritation which had been kept alive by portions of the press, in the interests of certain political parties in the two countries, from the time of the Syrian difficulty, and throughout the dispute on the Tahiti affair, in 1844, now found fresh aliment in the rupture of the two governments on the question of the Spanish marriages. It was in the midst of the alienation and suspicion with which the public mind regarded these proceedings of the French Court, that, towards the end of 1847, the Letter of the Duke of Wellington on our National Defences made its appearance, an event which led to an immediate "invasion panic," and furnished a never-failing argument to successive governments for in-

creased warlike expenditure. Nor was this the only evil produced by the Letter. It unfortunately gave rise to a host of imitators; for how could a military man, of whatever rank, be more patriotically employed than in following the example of the Commander-in-Chief, and proclaiming to the world the necessity for increased armaments? And, unhappily, this task could only be accomplished by rousing the hostile passions of two great nations, by appeals to the fears and resentment of the one, and accusations of meditated violence and treachery against the other.

The public has never been fully informed of the circumstances which led to the publication of this famous Letter. In a pamphlet which appeared in France, just previous to the opening of the session of 1848, written by M. Chevalier, who had already devoted his accomplished pen to the cause of the Anglo-French alliance, the Duke's letter had been treated in the character of an answer to Prince Joinville's publication. This drew from Lord John Russell an explanation in the House, on the authority of the Duke himself, in which he said that, "nothing could have given greater pain," to the writer, "than the publication of sentiments which he had expressed confidentially to a brother officer."* It was stated by Lord Palmerston, at a subsequent date, that the letter was written "in consequence of an able memorandum drawn up by Sir John Burgoyne."† Whoever gave it to the world must have assumed that it would possess an authority above criticism; otherwise, it contains passages which would have induced

* *Hansard*, xcvi. 909. † *Hansard*, clx. 18.

a friend to withhold it from publication. The concluding sentence, where, in speaking of himself, he says, "I am bordering upon seventy-seven years of age, passed in honour," affords sufficient proof that it was not intended for the public eye. The entire production, indeed, gives painful evidence of enfeebled powers. One extract will be sufficient; the italics are not in the original:

"I am accustomed to the consideration of these questions, and have examined and reconnoitred, over and over again, the whole coast from the North Foreland, by Dover, Folkestone, Beachy Head, Brighton, Arundel, to Selsey Bill, near Portsmouth; and I say that, excepting immediately under the fire of Dover Castle, *there is not a spot on the coast on which infantry might not be thrown on shore at any time of tide, with any wind, and in any weather*, and from which such body of infantry, so thrown on shore, would not find within a distance of five miles a road into the interior of the country, *through the cliffs*, practicable for the march of a body of troops."

Now, any person who has been in the habit of visiting Eastbourne and Hastings, knows that for half the year no prudent mariner brings his vessel within several miles of that coast, and that there is a considerable extent of shore where a landing is at all times impracticable. It may be safely affirmed that, if any one but the Duke of Wellington had stated that there was any shore in the world on which a body of troops could be landed "at any time of the tide, with any wind, and in any weather," the statement would have been deemed undeserving

of notice. The assertion, however, passed unchallenged at the time, and the entire Letter was quoted as an unanswerable proof that the country was in danger. To have ventured on criticism or doubt would only have invited the accusation of want of patriotism.

Few people now remember the incidents of the invasion panic which culminated in the spring of 1848. It was the first occasion on which the attempt had been made to terrify the public with the idea of a sudden invasion from France in a time of peace, without a declaration of war, and without the hope of conquest, or even the glory of honourable warfare. The theory degraded our civilised and polite neighbours to the level of pirates. And yet, so generally was it proclaimed by the London journals of the time, that the editor of that staid and philosophical print, the *Spectator*, drew on himself a remonstrance from his friend, the late Sir William Molesworth, in a letter dated January 17, 1848, from which the following is an extract:—

"You say that 'the next attack on England will probably be without notice; that 5000 Frenchmen might inflict disgrace on some defenceless post; 500 might insult British blood at Herne Bay, or even inflict indelible shame on the empire at Osborne House!' Good God! Can it be possible that you—whom I ranked so high among the public instructors of this nation—that *you* consider the French to be ruffians, Pindarees, freebooters—that *you* believe it necessary to keep constant watch and ward against them, as our Saxon forefathers did

against the Danes and the Nordmen, lest they should burn our towns, plunder our coasts, and put our queen to ransom," etc., etc.

It naturally followed, since the greatest military authority had proclaimed the country in danger, that it should be the fashion for civilians in high places to echo the cry of alarm. Even the peerage, that body which views all other agitations with so much serenity, partook of the excitement. Lord Ellesmere published a letter, bearing at its head the motto, "Awake, arise! or be for ever fallen!" in which he foretold that, in case of an invasion, the Guards would march out at one end of the metropolis as the French entered at the other, and that on the Lord Mayor would be imposed the duty of converting the Mansion House into a place where billets would be found for the foreign army; upon which Sir Robert Peel dryly remarked, that "he would defy the Lord Mayor afterwards to show his face in Cheapside."*

It was under these circumstances that Parliament assembled in 1848. The Whig Government, which had succeeded to power in 1846, on the disruption of the Conservative party consequent upon the repeal of the Corn Laws, found themselves with a deficient revenue, arising from the late famine in Ireland, and great depression in nearly all branches of trade and industry. On the 18th February, Lord John Russell made his financial statement for the year. For the better understanding of what is to follow, it may be well to give his opening remarks on the state of the nation:—

* *Hansard*, xcvi. 1074.

"I shall proceed, Sir, at once, by reminding the House that the year which has passed over our heads, or I should perhaps say, the period of the last eighteen months, has been one which, excepting cases of foreign war or domestic insurrection, is without a parallel, I think, in the history of this country. The changes and vicissitudes of prices—the difficulties of commerce—the panic which more than once prevailed —the extreme distress of a part of the United Kingdom—the extraordinary efforts that were made to relieve that distress—altogether affected the state of this country to a degree, that I believe it would not be easy to find an example of such distress in our history."*

After alluding to the great increase that had taken place in the French navy, he proposed, in order to meet the necessity for increased defensive armaments, and in accordance with the advice in the Duke of Wellington's letter, to re-organize the militia, and to slightly modify, without materially increasing, the regular forces. To cover the deficiency in the revenue, and to meet the increased charges for militia, etc., the minister proposed an addition of 5*d* in the pound to the income-tax, thus raising it from 7*d* to a shilling. The proposition, so far as concerned the increase of our armaments, appeared so moderate, when viewed in connection with the excitement that had reigned out of doors with respect to the designs of our neighbours, that it led Sir Robert Peel to remark—

* *Hansard*, xcvi. 900.

"After the panic which prevailed in this country about a month since, I am glad to find the tide has ebbed so fast, and that the alarm on the subject of invasion has visibly abated. I was afraid the Government might have been unduly influenced by that alarm; and I am relieved when I learn that it is not intended to make any increase in the military or naval force."

But the budget met with no favour from any part of the House, and it soon became evident that the intended addition to the income-tax would prove fatal to the whole scheme. The proposed increase of expenditure for militia, etc., was denounced by the reformers, who demanded a reduction of the existing establishments; whilst it was still more ominous to hear Mr. Bankes, the representative of the country gentlemen, declare that "that was not the moment to talk of valour and triumph, but the time for reflecting how they could remedy the evils which pressed so heavily on the great mass of the community."*

Whilst the Government measure was still under discussion, a portentous event occurred in France, which, if it had not involved the gravest consequences to Europe and the world, would have imparted a character of burlesque to the closing scene of the first invasion panic. On the evening of the 24th of February, 1848, whilst the House of Commons was in session, a murmur of conversation suddenly arose at the door, and spread through the House, when

* *Hansard*, xcvi. 932.

was witnessed—what never occurred before or since, in the writer's experience—a suspension, for a few minutes, of all attention to the business of the House, every member being engaged in close and earnest conversation with his neighbour.* The intelligence had arrived of the abdication and flight of Louis Philippe, and of the proclamation of the Republic. The monarch and his ministers—whose ambitious projects had furnished the pretexts for our warlike armaments; and the gallant prince—whose pamphlet had sounded like a tocsin in our ears, were now on their way to claim the hospitality of England.

Under any other circumstances than those in which the country now found itself, this astounding intelligence would probably have caused an increase rather than a diminution of the invasion panic. There was, indeed, a momentary effort, in certain quarters, to turn to account the apparition of the dread Republic, with all the grim reminiscences associated with its motto of "*Liberté, Egalité, et Fraternité.*" But the

* The writer of these pages was sitting by the side of the late Mr. Hume when the tidings reached their bench. Sir Robert Peel was on the opposite front seat, alone, his powerful party having been broken and scattered by his great measure of Corn-Law Repeal. "I'll go and tell Sir Robert the news," exclaimed Mr. Hume, and, stepping across the floor, he seated himself by his side, and communicated the startling intelligence. On returning to his place, he repeated, in the following words, the commentary of the ex-minister:—"This comes of trying to carry on a government by means of a mere majority of a Chamber, without regard to the opinion out of doors. It is what these people (pointing with his thumb over his shoulder to the protectionists behind him) wished me to do, but I refused."

nation was too much harassed with its internal difficulties to listen to the suggestion of those who would revive the terrors of an invasion. Bad as had been the condition of the country, it was now felt that there was a worse state of things impending, from the destruction of confidence, the suspension of trade, and the interruption to labour, which the revolutions, now spreading over the Continent, were sure to produce. Public meetings were called; men of influence, of different political parties, mingled on the same platform, to denounce the increase of taxation, to repudiate the desire for the Militia, or any other addition to the defensive armaments of the country, and to call for a reduction of the public expenditure. Petitions, in this sense, poured into the House, the Government took the alarm, and, on the 28th February, the Chancellor of the Exchequer withdrew the budget for amendment. The Militia Bill was heard of no more for four years. A Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to examine into the Military and Naval expenditure, with a view to greater economy in the Estimates. Before the close of the session, considerable reductions were announced. The Income-tax remained at its previous amount of 7*d* in the pound for the remainder of the year; and, on the meeting of Parliament in 1849, notwithstanding that a Bonaparte had just previously been elected President of the French Republic, and that the Continent generally was in a state of revolutionary disquiet, the Queen's Speech contained the following announcement:—

"The present aspect of affairs has enabled me to make large reductions on the Estimates of last year."

The advocates of a system of direct taxation may profit by the admission:—there can be no doubt that the proposal to add 5*d* in the pound to the Income-tax mainly contributed to put an end to the first invasion panic.

THE SECOND PANIC.

1851—1852—1853.

In ordinary years, when nothing occurs to concentrate public attention on this branch of the budget, it will be observed that the expenditure on the "Services" has a tendency to increase in proportion to the prosperity of the country.* Taking the amount of our foreign trade as the test of the progress of the nation, we shall find, looking back over the last ten or twelve years, that the amount of exports, and the amount of Military and Naval Estimates, have been augmented in nearly an equal ratio, both having been about doubled. It would seem as if there were

* "I have observed that there is always a great deal of pressure for an increase of the army and navy, and a great complaint about the defencelessness of the country, whenever there is a surplus income over expenditure. Why, it is a tempting thing, a large heap of money at the table of the Exchequer, and the knowledge, on the part of the 'Services,' that if John Bull can be sufficiently frightened into the cry for increased defences, there is a very good chance of some of the money being divided among them and theirs. Now, they have an eye on the surplus at this moment. I have an eye also on that surplus, which makes me peculiarly interested in this question. I want to apply it to the repeal of the taxes on knowledge; and, by spreading sound information among the people, to do something for their future happiness and prosperity."—*Speech of* Rt. Hon. T. Milner Gibson, M.P., *Manchester, January* 26, 1853.

some unseen power behind the Government, always able, unless held in check by an agitation in the country, to help itself to a portion of the national savings, limited only by the taxable patience of the public. A combination of circumstances, however, counteracted this tendency at the period to which we are now referring, the most influential of which was that "the landed interest was in a dissatisfied and uneasy state from anticipations of the great change in the commercial policy of the country, which was to come into full effect at the commencement of the present year"* (1849). Moreover, the party which had been for many years engaged in the struggle for the overthrow of the Corn-Laws, threw its energies into the agitation for a reduction of expenditure; whilst the approaching year of the Great Exhibition tended to hold in check ideas of a warlike nature, and to make it the fashion, for a time at least, to profess a faith in the tendency of the world towards peace.

The consequence of this state of things was a constant reduction of the military and naval expenditure from 1847 to 1851; as will be seen on reference to the preceding tables. During this time, with the exception of the usual letters from Admiral Napier, in the *Times*, on the state of the navy, and a volume published at the close of 1850, by Sir Francis Head, on "The Defenceless State of the Nation," which was calculated to throw ridicule on the subject by its exaggerations, little was said about a French

* *Annual Register*, vol. xci. p. 2.

invasion. Even the Great Duke's letter was for a time forgotten. But only for a time;—the occasion alone was wanting to revive the panic with increased violence. The country had been rapidly advancing towards that state of prosperity in which its timidity and pugnacity seem equally susceptible of excitement. Under the influence of free trade and the gold discoveries, our exports, which in 1848 had been £52,849,000, amounted in 1851 to £74,448,000: they were destined to reach, in 1852, £78,076,000; and to rise in 1853 to £98,933,000; being thus nearly doubled in five years. The revenue was in a satisfactory state, and the landed interest had nearly recovered from the despondency into which it had been thrown by the repeal of the Corn Laws.

It was under these circumstances that the *coup d'état* of December 2nd, 1851, and the re-election of Louis Napoleon as President of the Republic, with augmented powers, furnished the occasion for the outburst of the second invasion panic. From that day to the meeting of Parliament, on the 3rd February, a large portion of the metropolitan journals teemed with letters and articles of the most exciting character. The course pursued by these writers was inconsistent enough. They commenced by assailing personally, with unmeasured invective, the author of the *coup d'état*, and heaping contemptuous epithets on the French people who had rewarded him with their suffrages; and then forthwith they raised the cry of invasion, and proclaimed our defenceless condition:—conduct which, as will be seen, drew on them the animadversions of the leading statesmen,

on the meeting of Parliament. At the same time, there was the usual eruption of pamphlets, written chiefly by military and naval officers, containing projects for every variety of defensive armament.

In the debate on the Address, on the first night of the session of 1852, almost every speaker alluded with disapprobation to the inflammatory language of the press.

"I say that it is more than imprudent," said the Earl of Derby, "that it is more than injudicious, that it is more than folly; that it is perfect madness, at one and the same time to profess a belief in the hostile intentions of a foreign country, and to parade before the eyes of that very people the supposed inability of this country to defend itself; to magnify the resources of your supposed assailant, and to point out how easy would be the invasion if not the subjugation of this country (though, thank God! the most violent have not yet spoken of subjugation); but to speak of that invasion, accompanying it with details of the fearful amount of horror and bloodshed which, under any circumstances, must attend it, and then, in the same breath, to assail with every term of obloquy, of vituperation, and abuse, the public and private character of the man who wields that force which you say is irresistible."*

And again, speaking of the disposition of the President, he said:—

"My Lords, I will go further, and I will say that I firmly believe that the French President personally

* *Hansard*, cxix. 22.

is fully disposed to entertain friendly relations and to maintain a pacific policy towards other nations. But, my Lords, I think that if anything could divert him from that course—if he were a man likely to be worked upon by his own personal feelings—if anything were likely to divert him from that course of policy which I believe his inclination and his sense of the interests of France are likely to make him take, it would be the injudicious and, I may add, unjustifiable language which has been made use of by a large portion of the public press of this country, in commenting on the character of the French Government and people."*

In the House of Commons, on the same occasion, Lord John Russell, then Prime Minister, observed:—

"But really, to hear or read some of the letters, some of the language used by some portions of the press, one would imagine that these two great nations, so wealthy, so similar in enlightenment, were going to butcher one another, merely to try what would be the effect of percussion caps and needle guns."†

Both these statesmen, however, afforded substantial justification to the alarmists whom they thus eloquently rebuked, by intimating their determination to "prepare our defences," in order to make "invasion impossible." The public, of course, attributed their language to diplomatic reserve, whilst their action was quietly accepted as proof of impending danger.

As we were destined during the year 1852 to

* *Hansard*, cxix. 21. † *Hansard*, cxix. 102.

witness the reorganization of the militia, and an augmentation of our army and navy; and as the arguments by which these increased armaments were justified will be found to have exclusive reference to the danger of an invasion from France, it will be well to turn for a moment to the tables, and see exactly what the French Government had been doing since the downfall of Louis Philippe. Though it is rather beside the question—for we have never professed to match our land forces against those of France—it may be premised that the French Army was undergoing some reduction, and that the National Guard, whose million of armed men had been referred to with such alarming emphasis by Lord Palmerston in 1845, was being rapidly disbanded, and was destined ere long to disappear, with the exception of a nominal force kept up in a few large cities.

A reference to the tables will shew that, during the years 1849, 1850, and 1851, the period which intervened between the first and second panic, the strength of the French navy, whether measured by the total expenditure, the number of men, or the number of ships in commission, was considerably less that in any three years since 1840. It will be seen that the French expenditure, with the number of men and of ships in commission, both absolutely and in proportion to the British, was at the lowest point in 1851, the year which witnessed the renewal of the panic. These facts were stated at the time by those who resisted the increase of our armaments, and confronted the alarm of invasion; but their statements were discredited.

On the 16th February, 1852, Lord John Russell explained to the House his proposed Militia Bill. He alluded, at the outset, to his measure of 1848, the failure of which he frankly attributed to the necessity he was then under of proposing an increase of taxation. To demonstrate that he was not now acting under the pressure of the panic, he thus referred to the state of things under which he had formerly brought forward a similar project:—"At the time at which I then addressed the House, Louis Philippe was on the throne of France; there was no apparent revolution at hand; the disposition of that king was known to be pacific; his counsels were moderate and wise."* This is an illustration of that curious feature in these political delusions, that we are always called on to forget them as soon as they have served the purpose for which they are created. A convenient veil is here drawn over the panic caused by Prince Joinville's pamphlet, the Duke of Wellington's letter, the Spanish marriages, the predicted flight of the Guards from London, and every other incident that had played its part prior to 1848. Lord John Russell now proposed a plan by which it should be possible to enrol for the first year not less than 70,000 men; in the next year, 100,000; in the third, about 120,000; with the possibility of increase to 150,000. But the Militia Bill was destined to be fatal to the ministry of which he had been premier since the fall of Sir Robert Peel's Government in 1846.

* *Hansard*, cxix. 551.

A word of explanation is necessary to throw a light on what followed. During the recess of Parliament, Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Minister, had withdrawn from the Government. From the explanations which now took place, it appeared that, although there had been anterior differences between him and his colleagues, indeed between the Sovereign and her Foreign Secretary, the immediate cause of his retirement was the unauthorised expression of his approbation of the *coup d'état* of December 2nd, 1851. It was foreseen that this secession menaced the existence of a Cabinet already weak, and a few days only were required, after the meeting of Parliament, to verify this view. On the motion to bring in the Local Militia Bill, on the 20th February, 1852, Lord Palmerston carried an amendment for giving a more extended scope to the measure, which was followed by the resignation of Lord John Russell's Government, and the advent of Lord Derby to power.

On the first exposition of his views as Prime Minister, on the 27th February, the Earl of Derby spoke as follows:—

"My Lords, I believe that our naval forces were never in a better or more effective condition than at this moment. I believe that for all purposes, whether as regards the protection of our own shores, the defence of the numerous and distant colonies which form our empire, or for the protection of that extended commerce which crosses every sea and fills every port in the wide world, I believe that, for all

such purposes, our navy was never in a more effective state than it is now."*

As soon as the new ministry were constituted, they prepared another Militia Bill, which was introduced into the House by the Home Secretary on the 29th March. This measure met the approval of Lord Palmerston, to whose energetic support it mainly owed its success. He could almost, indeed, claim to be its author; for it transpired, incidentally, in the course of the discussion, that his frequent questions in the House, in the time of Sir Robert Peel's ministry, had had the effect of inducing them to prepare a measure for revising the Militia laws, but a change of ministry had prevented them from bringing it forward.† Lord Palmerston, moreover, in the course of the debates, identified himself more exclusively with the policy of the Bill, by stating that he had pressed on Lord John Russell, in 1846, the necessity of a similar measure.‡ To him, also, was left the task of finding arguments for the Bill; and it must be admitted that he fulfilled the duties of an advocate with a courage, at least, that could not be surpassed.

The reasons assigned by Mr. Walpole for introducing the measure, however ably stated, were so cautiously guarded by disavowals of any special ground for alarm, and so prudently seasoned with pledges for our peaceful foreign relations, that they

* *Hansard*, cxix. 894.

† Mr. Sidney Herbert, *Hansard*, cxix. 587.

‡ *Hansard*, cxix. 575.

were almost as good arguments for his opponents as for his own party; whilst the more general motives assigned, founded on vague and shadowy assumptions of possible danger, would have been equally indisputable if our existing navy had been ten times as efficient as it had just been declared to be by Lord Derby.

Lord Palmerston took a much bolder course. Falling back on his own idea of steam-navigation having given an advantage to our neighbour, or, to use his favourite phrase, having "thrown a bridge across the Channel," he now insisted on the practicability of fifty or sixty thousand men being transported, without notice, from Cherbourg to our shores in a single night. Such a declaration had not been before heard from one holding high rank in that House. It overleapt all reliance on our diplomacy, or our fleets; and, strange enough, in one who had offered such eager congratulations to the author of the *coup d'état*, the assumption of such a danger as this implied that our neighbour was little better than a buccaneer. But this hypothesis of sudden invasion is absolutely indispensable for affording the alarmists any standing ground whatever. Take away the liability to surprise, by admitting the necessity of a previous ground of quarrel, and the delays of a diplomatic correspondence, and you have time to collect your fleet, and drill* an army. Admit the argument

* "Give us a good stout man, and let us have him for sixty days to train him, and he will be as good a soldier as you can have."—*Evidence of* LORD HARDINGE, *Commander-in-Chief, before Sebastopol Committee.*

of suddenness of danger, and the only way of preventing your coasts and metropolis from being invaded by an army of fifty or sixty thousand men, is by being always prepared with an organized and disciplined force to repel them.

It was natural that such views should not pass unquestioned by intelligent professional men; among whom the veteran General who represented Westminster was prominent in shewing the practical difficulties of sending large expeditions over sea, and in demonstrating that "the sudden arrival of a French army in this metropolis was simply an impossibility."* Here is a specimen of the undaunted courage with which Lord Palmerston set at nought the experience of the hero of a score of battle fields:—

"My hon. and gallant friend (Sir De Lacy Evans) stated that, in collecting a large force for the purpose of crossing the Channel, such an extensive preparation must be made as would give us ample notice; but he is much mistaken with regard to the want of facilities which neighbouring countries possess for collecting together a formidable force and bringing it over to this country, without our having lengthened, or, indeed, even timely notice. The very ship dispatched to convey to this country intelligence of the threatened armament would probably not reach our shores much sooner than the hostile expedition."†

The naval authorities in the House were also heard on a question in which the character and effi-

* *Hansard*, cxx. 1040. † *Hansard*, cxx. 293.

ciency of their service were so much involved. Admiral Berkeley, who had been a Lord of the Admiralty under the previous Government, remarked that "Lord Palmerston had spoken of the French being enabled to raise 50,000 or 60,000 men in Cherbourg; but he did not tell the House how these men were to be transported across the Channel;" and the gallant speaker went on to say, "he would tell the noble Lord, the member for Tiverton, that it would take fifty or sixty vessels to embark those men he spoke of as being ready for action at Cherbourg, and it would take as many more vessels to protect them in the Channel." He added, with a view to allay the "absurd panic that had lately run through the country," that with an addition of 4000 men and 1000 boys to the navy, he would undertake to say that they would have a fleet of thirty steamers in the Channel, none of which would be under 900 or 1000 tons, and that, in the presence of such a force, he would defy any enemy to attempt a surprise; adding, characteristically, that "he should like to see them attempt to disembark on our shores in the face of such a force."*

Incidental to these debates was a motion made on the 30th March, by Mr. Anderson (the head of the great Peninsular and Oriental Steam Ship Company), "to show how invasion might be rendered impossible," in which he called attention to the Report of a Committee, appointed at his instance in 1849, which had recommended the Government to retain the ser-

* *Hansard*, cxx. 1136-7.

vices of our numerous merchant steamers as a reserve force for the defence of our shores. He pointed out the great advantage this country possessed over all others in the number of its merchant steamers; that for every horse-power possessed by France, we had twenty (in sailing vessels our superiority in tonnage being only as five to one); he stated, from evidence before the Committee, that upwards of a thousand of these vessels could be made available in case of war, and pledged himself to produce a private tradesman who, for £200, would fit the largest steamer to carry the heaviest pivot gun; and he alleged that the private Company with which he was connected could, alone, furnish vessels enough to form a line within signal distance of each other from the Channel Islands to the North Foreland.* Mr. Anderson went into the subject with a thorough practical knowledge of all its details, and carried the House, as he had carried his Committee, with him. His motion was accepted by the Government, but never acted on.

This motion was, however, only an episode in that great debate of the session which reflected the panic that had been excited in certain quarters out of doors. In spite of the opposition of the liberals and the free-trade party, the Militia Bill was passing through its various stages; and Lord Palmerston's theory of a nocturnal invasion, by a large army, continued to be the pivot of the debate. The weight of professional authority having gone so strongly against this theory, civilians were now encouraged

* *Hansard*, cxx. 369—379.

to speak out; and Lord John Russell, towards the close of the debate on the second reading, remarked, with unwonted bluntness, that "he did not wish to be mixed up with those who entertained apprehensions of the sudden arrival in this country of 50,000 hostile troops in a single night, without notice of any kind being received in this country; or that we should hear of an army marching up to London without our having had any previous symptoms of hostility. Those were notions which were founded upon panic rather than on reasonable calculation."* It was natural, too, that those members of the House who were identified with that body of British representatives residing at foreign capitals whom Burke has designated "licensed spies," should have revolted at such an imputation of want of vigilance on their part as was implied in this apprehended sudden invasion, and they found an ardent and eloquent defender in the present Sir Robert Peel, who had just previously withdrawn from the field of diplomacy:—

"What, I should like to know," said he, "is meant by the term 'sudden invasion' which is so often used, but with little consideration? The noble Lord, the member for Tiverton (Lord Palmerston), has defined it thus: 'We have to provide,' he says, 'not against a danger which may happen in six or eight months, but which may happen in a month or a fortnight, from the time when it is first apprehended.' I ask the House, and I ask the country, is it possible

* *Hansard*, cxx. 1000.

to admit this definition of the noble Lord? Let the House for one moment figure to itself the noble Lord sitting in Downing-street, with all the threads of European diplomacy concentrated, like so many electric wires, in his cabinet; and let the House then figure to itself the surprise of the noble Lord, on being told that that day fortnight 150,000 men were to be landed on the shores of Britain. Do you think the noble Lord believes this to be possible? Not at all."*

Following after nearly the whole of these speakers, and on the last night of the debate on the second reading of the Militia Bill, Lord Palmerston thus manfully stood his ground:—"The application of steam to navigation has in effect made a bridge over the Channel, and has given the means of quick attack —an attack on a scale of magnitude such as did not exist before. Again, it is said we should know beforehand, if any preparations were being made. I say you might not know, because, by the internal arrangements of railways, the distribution of troops is such that 50,000 or 60,000 men might be collected at Cherbourg before you knew anything of the matter; and those who have seen what those immense works are, must be perfectly aware that such a number of men could walk from the quay into their vessels, as easily as they could walk into their barrack-yard. A single night would bring them over, and all our naval preparations, be they what they might, could not be relied on to prevent the arrival of such an

* *Hansard*, cxx. 1078.

expedition, as no batteries or gun-boats we might have on our shores could be relied on to prevent the landing of the expedition when it had arrived."*

With what a grim smile of incredulity would the threat of this nocturnal apparition have been received by both sides of the House, if it had been urged in support of the Militia Bill of 1848! The country gentlemen were then too much haunted by the free-trade spectre, and the commercial members too seriously preoccupied with their distresses, to have allowed themselves to be scared by so fantastical an appeal to their imagination; but the "Country Party" were now in power, their protectionist alarms were dissipated, and they welcomed the Militia Bill with acclamation. An increasing revenue, with a surplus in the Exchequer and a prosperous trade, insured the success of the bill; which, however, was not passed without a determined opposition, led on by the free trade party. In the course of the struggle, it was mentioned by Mr. Moffat,† as a proof of the unpopularity of the bill, that nearly 800 petitions had been presented against it, and not one in its favour. It was certainly a singular spectacle, to see the representatives of the great centres of population and wealth, with the metropolitan members at their head, resisting a measure which had been brought forward on the plea that it was indispensable for their security.

Where then could have been the "panic"?—Will be the obvious inquiry. This question was fre-

* *Hansard*, cxx. 1104. † *Hansard*, cxx. 1116.

quently and sarcastically asked in the course of the debate; and it was answered in terms not over complimentary to the parties referred to. Mr. Hume bluffly remarked that, "our present panics were not due, as in times past, to the old women, but to our having too many clubs about London, containing so many half-pay officers, who had nothing to do but to look about for themselves and their friends. These were the people who wrote to the newspapers, anxious to bring grist to the mill somehow or other."* And Captain Scobell, alluding to the same subject, said—"If he added a remark not very complimentary to the other branch of the service, it should be jocularly; but the alarm about invasion was chiefly expressed by soldiers, from the illustrious Duke downwards. Sir Francis Head was a soldier; and so was the 'Swiss Colonel'; and many of them had, by their writings, helped to raise and keep up the alarm. And the reason was plain; they could not comprehend the capabilities of resistance that might be made on the ocean, and especially the resources that had been put into our hands by the power of steam."†

Lord Derby's Government having passed their Militia Bill, empowering them to raise 80,000 men, besides other measures, a dissolution took place on the first of July, and the new Parliament assembled for a short session before Christmas.

In the meantime, two events had taken place—the death of the Duke of Wellington, and the an-

* *Hansard*, cxx. 285. † *Hansard*, cxix. 1449.

nouncement of the approaching re-establishment of the Empire in France—which were exercising a considerable influence on the public mind. The former occurrence had naturally attracted universal attention to the biography of the Great Warrior, whose military exploits filled the pages of the public journals, became the engrossing theme of our public speakers, and even resounded from many pulpits. Public attention was thus carried back to the long and mutually destructive wars which we had waged with France, and it was but natural that some of the old national animosity should have been revived. This feeling received a great impulse from what was occurring on the other side of the Channel. By a singular coincidence, the imposing national tribute of a public funeral in St. Paul's, on the 18th November, 1852, was followed by the voting for the Empire in France on the 21st. The historical painter might have represented the third Napoleon rising from the yet open tomb of the vanquisher of the first! What wonder, if in some minds there was the irritating consciousness that all the great deeds of the departed hero had not borne permanent fruits? The feeling of apprehension, however, predominated. The traditional terror connected with the name of Bonaparte was revived; people began again to talk of invasion, and before Christmas the alarmists had more complete possession of the field than at any previous time.

On the 6th December, 1852, Lord Malmesbury formally announced, in the House of Lords, the election of the Emperor of the French. He spoke in

terms of the most unqualified confidence of the friendly and pacific intentions of the ruler and people of France. "I believe," said his Lordship, "that the Emperor himself, and the great mass of his people, deeply feel the necessity, for the interests of both countries, that we should be on a footing of profound peace; and, on the other hand, they see the great folly and crime which it would be on either side to provoke war. They must know that a war, as far as it would lead to the subjugation of either country by the other, is an absurdity; that neither country, so great, so powerful, and so independent, could in any manner subjugate the other, and that, therefore, war must be as useless as cruel, and as inglorious as useless."*

Nothing could have been more satisfactory than this announcement, had it not been accompanied by a practical commentary elsewhere, which, in the eyes of the unsophisticated public, converted these excellent sentiments into hollow diplomatic phrases. On the very same evening on which this communication was made to the Lords, the Government proposed in the Commons an addition of 5000 seamen and 1500 marines to the navy, on the ground, as alleged by the Secretary of the Admiralty, that "the time had arrived when, with the most pacific intentions, it was absolutely necessary that we should put our Channel defences in a new position, and man the Channel with a large force."† Had it been his studied purpose to furnish arguments to the alarmists

* *Hansard*, cxxiii. 975. † *Hansard*, cxxiii. 1006.

out of doors, nothing could have been contrived more calculated to swell the panic cry of invasion than the tone of mystery and reserve with which the naval secretary deprecated all discussion on this vote:—

"He trusted that, if he should then decline to enter into any detailed information with respect to that vote, no gentleman would attribute such a course to a desire to treat him individually with discourtesy, but would feel that it was owing to *the determination at which the Government had arrived, after the most serious consideration, that it would be better, under existing circumstances, not to enter into any particulars with respect to that course.* He asked the present vote from the House of Commons, not as a vote of confidence in any particular ministry, but as a vote of confidence in that Executive which, whatever party might be at the head of the Government, must necessarily be charged with the defence of the country, *must necessarily be in possession of secret and important intelligence, and must necessarily be the fitting and only judge how far that intelligence ought to be communicated to the House.*"*

If anything could add to the mistrust in the public mind which this was calculated to produce, it was the readiness with which the leading statesmen on the opposition side of the House accepted the doctrine of implicit confidence in the Executive. Sir Francis Baring, in expressing his approval of the proposed increase, remarked that "no one knew more

* *Hansard*, cxxiii. 1006—7.

than himself how difficult it was to state the grounds for any increase. It was for the Government to state, on their responsibility, what they thought necessary for the service of the country, and he was not one of those who would oppose what they thought necessary."* This doctrine, which, if generally acted upon, would be an abdication of one of the chief functions of the House of Commons, proceeds upon a double fallacy—first, in assuming that the Executive can, in these days, be in possession of secrets unknown to the public, respecting the warlike preparations or the political attitude of other countries; and, secondly, in assuming, that, if the Government possessed any such secret information, there could be half as much inconvenience from disclosing it to the House of Commons as from the adoption of this principle of abject confidence in the Ministry.

The proposed increase in the navy was, however, carried without a division. An addition of 2,000 men and 1,000 horses for the artillery was also voted. There had been 3,000 men previously added to the army, and, as we have seen, power was given to the Government to raise 80,000 men for the militia,—50,000 for the first year, and 30,000 more for the second. All this was achieved during their few months of office by the Earl of Derby's Government, who, so long as they were engaged in making these additions to our establishments, met with support from their opponents; but, that task achieved, thenceforth the benefit of implicit confidence in the

* *Hansard*, cxxiii. 1013.

Executive was no longer extended to them, and they were overthrown a few days afterwards in a division on the budget, which was virtually a vote of want of confidence, and were succeeded by Lord Aberdeen's administration.

This increase in our armaments failed to allay, in the slightest degree, the agitation of the alarmists. It seems to be the peculiar characteristic of these panics, that they who fall under their influence are deprived of all remembrance of what has been already done for their security. This state of mind is natural enough in those who embrace the hypothesis that we are in nightly danger of an invasion, without notice or provocation, by an army of 50,000 men. These persons do not employ their minds in discussing the probable grounds of quarrel with France, or in speculating on the chances of a rupture; but they assume the constant disposition for war on the part of our neighbour, as well as his complete preparation for attack. From the moment that such a theory of invasion as this is adopted, any plan of defence must necessarily be insufficient for security. It is to this state of mind that all the writers and speakers on the subject addressed themselves,* as

* The following are specimens:—

A Letter on the Defence of England by Corps of Volunteers and Militia, by Sir CHAS. JAS. NAPIER.

The Invasion of England, by an Englishman and a Civilian.

National Defences, by MONTAGU GORE, Esq.

A Letter to Lord John Russell, containing Suggestions for forming a Reserve Force, signed "GEORGE PAGET."

may be seen by a mere glance at the titles of the pamphlets which issued in unprecedented numbers from the press in the present year (1852).

The alarm was constantly stimulated by startling paragraphs in the newspapers. One day the French army at Rome was reported to be chafing and dissatisfied, because it could not share in the invasion of England and the sack of London: the next, there were whispered revelations of a secret plan, divulged by General Changarnier, for invading England and seizing the metropolis (which he publicly contradicted): then we were told of a plot for securing a naval station in the West Indies: next, the French Government had sent an order for steam frigates to Messrs. Napier, of Glasgow (which was contradicted on the authority of those gentlemen): there was a cry of alarm at the apparition of a French ship of

Memorandum on the Necessity of a Secretary of State for our Defence and War Establishments.

Proposals for the Defence of the Country by means of a Volunteer Force, by JOHN KINLOCH, late Captain Second Life Guards.

Defensive Position of England, by Captain CHAS. KNOX.

The Peril of Portsmouth, by JAS. FERGUSSON, Esq.

A Plan for the formation of a Maritime Militia, by Captain C. ELLIOT.

Observations on Commissariat, Field Service, and Home Defences, by Sir RANDOLPH I. ROUTH.

The National Defence of England, by BARON P. E. Translated by Capt. J. E. ADDISON.

Thoughts on National Defence, by Rear-Admiral BOWLES.

Brief Suggestions on the Subject of War and Invasion.

Notes on the Defensive Resources of Great Britain, by Captain FYERS, Half-pay Royal Artillery.

war at Dover, which, it afterwards turned out, had been driven in by stress of weather: then there were small French vessels of war seen moving about the Isle of Wight, to the surprise of some of our authorities, who should have known that the French Government are bound by convention to send cruisers into the Channel, to see that the fisheries regulations are observed by their fishermen; and then came the old story of French vessels being seen taking soundings in our waters, though, as every body knows, the most perfect charts of the Channel, published under the authority of the Admiralty, may be purchased for a few shillings.

But these little paragraphs, which flew from journal to journal, would have fallen harmless on the public ear if they had not been accompanied by alarming reports, from "our own correspondents" in Paris, of the immense increase going on in the French navy. Besides, there was the eloquent silence of our own Secretary of the Admiralty when he proposed the augmentation of our navy. What could that reserve and secrecy mean, but something too frightful to reveal? True, the French army had been reduced by 50,000 men, and the National Guard was practically dissolved, but that did not concern us: what object could a Bonaparte possibly have in doubling the strength of his navy, if it was not to attack England? To show to what an extent this delusion gained credence, let us quote from an article in that generally accurate historical record, the *Annual Register* for September 21, 1852:—"The French have been making gigantic efforts to raise

their navy to a formidable strength;" and, after entering into many details to show the large additions made to their fleet, the article thus concludes: "Their navy seems to have doubled in effective strength within the two years of the Prince President's power."* So strong were the feelings of suspicion, jealousy, and apprehension on this subject at the re-assembling of Parliament in February, 1853, that Mr. Ewart, with a view of offering a public denial to these alarming rumours, took the extraordinary course of addressing a letter of inquiry to M. Ducos, the Minister of Marine, whose answer, which obtained general publicity at the time, is here reproduced:—

"PARIS, *February* 25, 1853.

"SIR,—The questions which you do me the honour to put in your letter of the 19th of February might perhaps appear to me unusual, if my mind really entertained the strange ideas which some persons appear to ascribe to me in England.

"But, far from considering these questions indiscreet or inopportune, I rejoice at them, because they afford me an opportunity of giving you the complete assurance of my peaceful sentiments.

"I should consider it as the greatest of misfortunes if a serious misunderstanding should break out between the two nations; and I desire, with all my heart, that the best intelligence may continue to prevail between them.

"Your newspapers make much stir about our pre-

* *Annual Register*, 1852, p. 148, "Chronicle."

sumed warlike preparations. I confine myself to declaring to you that I have not armed a single gunboat, stirred a single cannon, or equipped a single sailor. I remain the calm spectator of the enormous expenses which you are making to conjure away an imaginary danger; and I admire the facility with which you augment your budget when no real necessity prescribes it.

"If the members of your Parliament, who are so pre-occupied with our projects of invasion, would give themselves the trouble of paying us a short visit, they would be more surprised than I am myself, perhaps, at the extreme readiness with which the rumour (almost amounting to a pleasantry) of our supposed warlike preparations has been received among you.

"I thank you, Sir, for allowing me to establish a certain degree of intercourse between us; and I beg you to accept the expression of my most distinguished sentiments.

"THEODORE DUCOS.

"Monsieur Ewart, Membre de la Chambre des Communes, &c."

With M. Ducos, the writer of these pages had not the honour of a personal acquaintance; but he happened to be on terms of very intimate friendship with one of his colleagues, with whom he was in correspondence at the time, and from whom he received the following note, which had been written to him by the Minister of Marine, at the moment of receiving the letter of inquiry from Mr. Ewart. As this letter was penned by M. Ducos under circumstances which precluded any idea of conceal-

ment or misrepresentation, it will be read with probably greater interest than the more formal communication; especially that part which refers to the cabinet device, common to both countries, of resorting to imaginary terrors as a means of swelling budgets and strengthening majorities:—

"My dear Colleague,

"Do you read the English journals and the debates in Parliament?

"Verily, I am astonished at the din they are making on the other side of the Channel. Will you believe that I have just received a letter from a Member of the House of Commons, asking me seriously if the armaments we are preparing are destined for a war with England, and if we are pushing this constant augmentation of the forces of the two nations in a spirit of rivalry! I send you the letter, that you may not doubt my veracity. Will you answer it, or shall I?

"Our armaments! forsooth. What does it mean? You know as well as I that to this day we have not armed a poor little boat beyond our ordinary fleet. With a budget reduced by forty millions (francs) compared with the budget of Louis Philippe, we are obliged to confine ourselves within the narrowest limits.

"England increases her budget of this year by sixteen millions (francs); she forms her militia; she recruits her sailors; she makes her coasts bristle with heavy artillery. We look on tranquilly, without comprehending all these efforts, and without having

for a single instant the idea or the apprehension that she is going to invade us.

"Mr. Ewart asks me in confidence, and whispering in my ear, if we are actuated by sentiments of rivalry in pushing our armaments! I declare that I cannot understand it. We have not armed one vessel, we have not touched one gun, we have not equipped one soldier, we have not recruited one cabin-boy: and they ask us seriously if we are a very thunderbolt of war? It seems to me, that the question might be more seasonably addressed to the members of the English Cabinet, who are covering themselves with armour, and *who possibly may not be very much distressed by these imaginary terrors (as we have sometimes seen among ourselves), inasmuch as they enable them to swell their budget, and serve to strengthen a somewhat uncertain majority in Parliament.*

"Ah! my dear colleague, you see that all the geese do not come from the United States, or swim in the Seine. You perceive that the question from London makes me quite merry. Forgive me, my dear colleague. I conclude by asking whether I must write to Mr. Ewart, and tell him, for his great satisfaction, that I am a greater friend to peace than himself, and that I look upon war between France and England as a universal calamity, which every wise man ought to exert himself to prevent.

"THEODORE DUCOS."

But this excellent attempt of Mr. Ewart to allay the public excitement produced no apparent effect.

Nothing could surpass the child-like simplicity with which any of the above absurd and improbable rumours respecting the hostile preparations of the French were believed, unless it were the stolid scepticism with which all offers to demonstrate their falsehood were rejected.

It will be well to turn for an instant to the tables in the first page, and bring the question of the state of the French navy at this time to the test of those authentic figures. Let us take the specific allegation in the *Annual Register* for 1852 (Sept. 21), that, during the two years of the Prince President's power, the French navy was doubled in effective force. Louis Napoleon was declared President of the Republic on the 20th December, 1848, and was proclaimed Emperor on the 2nd December, 1852. His term of presidency may therefore be said to have extended over the years 1849, 1850, 1851, and 1852. The following figures give the total expenditure, the amount of wages in dockyards, the number of seamen, and the number of ships in commission, for each of those years, and also for the two preceding years, 1847 being the last year of Louis Philippe's reign, and 1848 the first year of the Republic :—

	Wages in Dockyards.	Total Expenditure.	No. of Seamen.	No. of Ships in Commission.
	£	£		
1847	448,333	5,145,900	32,169	240
1848	444,085	4,985,872	28,760	242
1849	456,155	3,923,276	27,063	211
1850	432,837	3,406,866	24,679	181
1851	416,773	3,293,737	22,316	166
1852	425,811	3,462,271	25,016	175

Taking 1851, the third year of the presidency of

Louis Napoleon, when, it will be admitted, his policy must have had time to develop itself, and comparing it with the sixteen previous years comprised in the table given in the first page, it will be seen that there is only one year (1835) when France had so few ships in commission; only two years (1835-6) in which she maintained so few seamen; and only five years (1835-6-7-8-9) when the total expenditure had been so low. And, instead of the effective force being doubled, it will be seen that a continual reduction had been going on during the first three years of the President's rule, with only an insignificant rise in 1852. The diminution in the dockyard expenditure was, in both countries, proportionately less than in the other items, owing to the more costly nature of the new naval constructions.

If we take the average of the four years, 1849 to 1852, it will be found to be very much less than the average of the last ten years of Louis Philippe's reign; and, looking back over the tables of both countries for the whole period, it will be found that scarcely at any time was the French navy so weak, in comparison with that of England, as in 1851. M. Ducos, in the above private letter to his colleague, asserts that his expenditure was forty millions (£1,600,000) less than that of his predecessor in the time of Louis Philippe; and if we compare the year 1852 with that of 1847, it more than verifies his statement.

It is now very well known, apart from the proofs afforded by these figures, that, owing to the embarrassed state of the French finances during the Republic, and the struggle, involving the very exist-

ence of social order, then going on, very little attention was paid to the Navy. A Parliamentary Commission, of which M. Dufaure was named "Reporter," was appointed by the National Assembly in 1849, to inquire into the state of the navy, and two goodly quarto volumes were the result, with minutes of the evidence and the discussions; but its proceedings were brought to an untimely end by the *coup d'état* of the 2nd December, 1851, and they led to but few practical results.

It was under circumstances so little calculated to provoke our fear or resentment, that the cry of alarm and defiance was raised more loudly than ever through the winter and spring of 1852-3. Men of the highest political and social rank resigned themselves to the excitement. Two cabinet ministers, who had gone to their constituents for re-election, on taking office in Lord Aberdeen's government, were afterwards called upon, by their opponents in the House, to explain the violent language uttered by them at the hustings in allusion to the ruler and people of France.*

"I tell you," said the Lord Lieutenant of Yorkshire, addressing the militia of that county, "the time is coming when everybody throughout this realm will have reason to be thankful that you have come forward to defend your hearths and homes."†

Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, through the columns of a public journal, thus added fuel to the flame:—"I have received positive information, which cannot be doubted, that the French are now striving to the

* *Hansard*, cxxiv. 267. † *Hansard*, cxxiv. 293. quoted.

very utmost to increase their naval force in every manner; and that arrangements have now been officially decided upon, to continue, year after year, similar exertions. I cannot give my authority, but trust that I shall be believed when I say that this information may be most thoroughly relied upon." And the writer adds, by way of emphasis, "I repeat that the information I have received, of preparations which can only be made for aggression, may be relied on."*

At the same time, the strictures of the leading journals assumed a more virulent tone towards the chief of the French people. Such had been the withering influence of legislative restrictions and fiscal exactions upon the periodical press, that the publication of daily newspapers was restricted to the three capitals of the United Kingdom, and their circulation among twenty-six millions of people did not exceed, in the aggregate, sixty or seventy thousand copies daily. A monopoly of publicity was, indeed, virtually possessed by one London journal, whose conductors had thus the power of giving the impress of public opinion to whatever views they chose to espouse. The columns of this paper now teemed with the most violent denunciations of the French ruler, not unmixed with expressions of contempt for the people of France. One writer† of a series of impassioned invectives was betrayed into expressions not obscurely suggestive of assassination.

* *Times*, February 7-12, 1853.

† Letters of "An Englishman," in the *Times*.

A reaction was at length produced in a quarter supposed to be peculiarly influenced by this journal. That part of the community most slow to enter upon any public movement, the merchants and bankers of London, convened, by circular, a meeting of those "who feel called upon at this time publicly to express their deep concern at witnessing the endeavours continually made to create and perpetuate feelings of mistrust, ill-will, and hostility between the inhabitants of the two great nations of England and France," and they took the unprecedented step of sending to the Emperor of the French a deputation of leading citizens, carrying with them an address bearing more than a thousand signatures.

On the meeting of Parliament, Mr. Disraeli took an opportunity of drawing attention to these manifestations of hatred and terror towards France; declaring that it was "extremely strange and startling, that, under such circumstances, an idea should have seemed to enter into almost every man's brain, and an expression into every man's mouth, that we are on the eve of a rupture with that country." And, alluding to the gross attacks that had been levelled at the ruler of France, he said:—"Remember, that all this time, while the French Government were quietly and diplomatically working with our Government for great objects of public benefit and advantage—that French Government were painted as corsairs and banditti,* watching to attack our coasts

* Take, as a specimen, the similitude of burglars, under which, when speaking of the danger of invasion, our brave and polished neighbours were described by a well-known writer of the day—

without the slightest provocation and without the slightest warning."*

Such was the state of feeling in the Spring of 1853. The nation had grown rich and prosperous with a rapidity beyond all precedent. Our exports had risen from £52,849,000 in 1848, to £98,933,000 in 1853, having nearly doubled in five years. History shows that such a condition of things is fruitful in national follies and crimes, of which war is but the greatest. The time is not yet, though it will come, when people will be able to bear the blessings of prosperity and liberty, with peace. Whilst it seemed only a question upon whom we should expend our exuberant forces,—whether on France or some other enemy,—we "drifted" into hostilities in an unexpected direction. The Turk was allowed to declare war for us against Russia, after we had agreed to the terms of peace offered for us on behalf of the latter country. Could this have happened amid the commercial depression and gloom of 1848?

The sudden change which was now to be witnessed in the temper of the public and the action of the Government was so unlooked for, and so utterly beyond all rational calculation, that it might be compared to the shifting of the view in a kaleidoscope.

a man of rank and a clergyman:—"When burglars are about, we examine the scullery and cellar windows; we try the fastenings of our doors, hang up bells to warn us, get dogs and police to watch for us, and go to bed in confidence that we are so prepared against an attack, that few are likely to attempt it."—S. G. O., in *Times* (*Hansard*, cxxiv. 290.)

* *Hansard*, cxxiv. 263.

By way of bringing what took place clearly, and in the fewest words, home to the reader's apprehension, let us illustrate it by an individual case. Let us suppose an invalid to have been ordered, for the benefit of his health, to make the voyage to Australia and back. He left England in the month of February or March. The Militia was preparing for duty; the coasts and dockyards were being fortified; the navy, army, and artillery were all in course of augmentation; inspectors of artillery and cavalry were reported to be busy on the southern coasts; deputations from railway companies, it was said, had been waiting on the Admiralty and Ordnance, to explain how rapidly the Commissariat and military stores could be transported from the Tower to Dover or Portsmouth; and the latest paragraph of news from the Continent was that our neighbours, on the other side of the Channel, were practising the embarkation and disembarkation of troops by night. He left home amidst all these alarms and preparations for a French invasion. After an absence of four or five months, during which time he had no opportunity of hearing more recent news from Europe, he steps on shore at Liverpool, and the first newspaper he sees informs him that the English and French fleets are *lying* side by side in Besika Bay. An impending naval engagement between the two powers is naturally the idea that first occurs to him; but, glancing at the leading article of the journal, he learns that England and France have entered into an alliance, and that they are on the eve of commencing a sanguinary war against Russia!

Leaving our imaginary individual to recover from his surprise, it may naturally be inferred that he would feel some misgivings as to the prudence of placing ourselves at the mercy of a ruler whom he had so recently heard denounced as little better than a bandit and a pirate. It would certainly have required a much smaller effort of the imagination to have suspected a plot between our ally and the enemy, by which the two Emperors,—having united their forces at Sebastopol, taken our army captive, and destroyed our fleet,—should have seized on Constantinople and Egypt, and made a partition of Turkey, than to have believed in the possibility of an invasion by an army of fifty or sixty thousand Frenchmen in a single night, without notice or provocation.

No such doubts, however, seem to have troubled the minds of our alarmists. They who had been the most vehement in their denunciations of the French Government, were now the strongest supporters of the Anglo-French alliance, and the loudest in clamouring for a war with Russia; and, for the next five years, no more was heard of a French invasion.

THE THIRD PANIC.

1859—1860—1861.

"We must have one more war with Russia for the independence and freedom of Europe, and then all will unite in favour of a reduction of armaments," was the language with which some friends of peace reconciled themselves to the Crimean war. They have since seen additions made to the permanent armed forces of Europe, equalling, probably, in numbers the armies engaged in the Crimean struggle. So true is the saying of Bastiat, that "the ogre, war, costs as much for his digestion as for his meals."

It was formerly said of us, that we were a warlike, but not a military nation. The Russian war has gone far to make us both.

At the close of the great French war, in 1815, there were not wanting members of the Whig aristocracy, and a phalanx of distinguished popular leaders, to call back the nation to its old maxims against large standing armies in time of peace; and who not only kept alive the jealousy of permanent camps and barracks, but opposed the formation even of clubs set apart exclusively for the "Services," and denounced the whole paraphernalia of a military organization. *They* did not accept war as the normal state of mankind; nor did *they*, discarding all reliance

on the spirit and patriotism of the people, attempt to drill them, like Russians or Austrians, into mere warlike machines.* But at the termination of the

* The following is a specimen of the language in which our fathers were addressed by their great political leaders nearly half a century ago. And these were the sentiments of the Hollands, Miltons, Lansdownes, Tierneys, Broughams, Russells, and even the Grenvilles and Wellesleys, of those days:—"In despotic countries, it may be necessary to maintain great armies as seminaries of warlike spirit. The mind, which in such wretched countries has no noble object to employ its powers, almost necessarily sinks into languor and lethargy, when it is not roused to the destructive phrenzy of war. The show of war during peace, may be necessary to preserve the chief skill of the barbarian, and to keep up the only exalted feeling of the slave. The savage soon throws off habits of order; and the slave is ever prone to relapse into the natural cowardice of his debased condition. But in this mightiest of Free Communities, where no human faculty is suffered to lie dormant, and where habitual order, by co-operation, gives effect to the intense and incessant exertion of power, the struggles of honourable ambition, the fair contests of political party, the enterprizes of ingenious industry, the pursuits of elegant art, the fearless exercise of reason upon the most venerable opinions, and upon the acts of the highest authorities, the race of many for wealth, and of a few for power or fame, are abundantly sufficient to cultivate those powers, and to inspire those energies which, at the approach of war, submit to discipline, and quickly assume the forms of military science and genius. A free nation like ours, full of activity and boldness, and yet full of order, has all the elements and habits of an army, prepared by the happy frame of its society. We require no military establishments to nurse our martial spirit. It is our distinction, that we have ever proved ourselves in time of need a nation of warriors, and that we never have been a people of soldiers. It is no refinement to say, that the national courage and intellect have acted with the more vigour on the approach of hostility, because we are not teazed and worried into petty activity; because a proud and

Crimean war, the governing powers of this country seemed to be possessed but of one idea,—how Englishmen could be drilled and disciplined into a state of constant readiness for future continental campaigns. Hence we have seen a military activity never before known in England in a time of peace, as witness the columns of the daily press, filled with "Military and Naval Intelligence." The object of those who, by their rank and influence, have mainly contributed to produce this state of things, has not been concealed. "What I want to see," said Mr. Sidney Herbert, "is a military spirit pervading all classes of the community; but especially the influential and intelli-

serious people have not been degraded, in their own eyes, by acting their awkward part in holiday parade. Where arms are the national occupation, the intervals of peace are times of idleness, during which a part, at least, of the people must fit themselves for the general business, by exercising the talents and qualities which it requires. But where the pursuits of peace require the highest activity, and the nature of the government calls forth the highest spirit, the whole people must always possess the materials and principles of a military character. Freemen are brave, because they rely on themselves. Liberty is our national point of honour. The pride of liberty is the spring of our national courage. The independent spirit, the high feeling of personal dignity, and the consequent sensibility to national honour, the true sources of that valour for which this nation has been renowned for ages, have been, in a great measure, created and preserved by their being accustomed to trust to themselves for defence against invasion from abroad or tyranny at home. If they lean on an army for safety, they will soon look to it with awe; and thus gradually lose those sentiments of self-respect and self-dependence, that pride of liberty, which are the peculiar and the most solid defences of this country."—Sir James Mackintosh, House of Commons, February 28, 1816.

gent middle class. I believe the volunteer corps will effect that object to a large extent; and, therefore, if for that alone, I think they ought to be encouraged."* The consequence has been, not only an enormous increase of our military estimates, but such an outlay for permanent barracks and camps as to imply a complete abandonment, for the future, of our old habits and maxims as a self-relying and free people. The unfinished works at Aldershott, alone, have already cost £1,421,153,†—an amount, for the time and purpose, perhaps unexampled in the world's history. Our business, however, must still be mainly with the navy.

At the conclusion of the war, a grand Naval Review took place at Spithead, which is thus recorded in the *Annual Register* for 1856, with the accompanying remark that the "steam gun-boats formed the novel feature of the review."

"The vast naval force reviewed on this occasion, consisted of 22 steam-ships of the line, of from 60 to 131 guns, 53 frigates and corvettes, 140 gun-boats, 4 floating batteries, and 50 mortar-vessels and mortar-boats: the aggregate power of the steam-engines, 30,671 horses, and the number of guns, 3002."

Addressing the House, May 8, 1856, after the ratification of the Treaty of Peace, Lord Palmerston said that "having begun the war with a fleet of comparatively small amount, we were enabled, at the end of the war, to present at Spithead the spectacle of such a fleet as called forth from the Earl of

* *Hansard*, clv. 699.

† *Parliamentary Paper*, No. 327, 1861.

Derby the eulogy that 'no country ever possessed so mighty a naval armament.' We had, at the beginning of the war, a total force of 212 ships; and at the end of the war we have 590."*

The greater portion of this increase consisted of gun-boats and mortar-vessels; and, with a view to a due appreciation of the systematic manner in which they are destined henceforth to pass into oblivion, when successive First Lords, or Secretaries of the Admiralty introduce the Navy Estimates, it is necessary that we should fully apprehend the importance which competent judges attached, at the time, to this addition to our defensive armament. A few weeks later, the First Lord of the Admiralty himself, when alluding to the fact of these gun-boats having been completed too late to be employed in offensive operations against the enemy, remarked:—

"Happily, however, the means thus provided for attack can now be made equally available as a part of our permanent establishment for purposes of defence. The gun-boats and floating-batteries, recently constructed for other objects, will constitute a valuable and effective armament for protecting our shores from assault. The expense incurred in their equipment will, therefore, be money not ill-spent. I think it required the stern experience of war to teach us the value of such a force; for I do not believe the House of Commons could have been induced, in a period of uninterrupted peace, to vote the additional funds requisite for creating it."†

* *Hansard*, cxli. 226. † *Hansard*, cxlii. 1423.

"We commenced the war," said Captain Scobell, on the same occasion, "with only large ships; and it was only after two years' experience that we discovered the gun-boat tribe. If, some time ago, we had had that magnificent fleet of gun-boats which had recently been reviewed at Spithead, something would have been done in the Baltic which would have been remembered for centuries."*

Let it be borne in mind that we were at the close of a war in which we had destroyed the Russian fleet in the Black Sea, and, by the terms of the Treaty of Peace, had prohibited its reconstruction. The Russian power, in that remote region, had been hitherto invested with a certain mystery; and the fleet of Sebastopol had often, in the speeches of our alarmists, been made to assume mythical proportions. The Secretary of the Navy, in 1852, the year before the Crimean war, when seeking to justify his comparatively moderate expenditure for that year, appealed to the Russian force in the Black Sea, which, according to his statement, comprised 18 line-of-battle ships, 12 frigates and corvettes, and 19 smaller vessels.† These ships were now lying sunk in the harbour of Sebastopol.

It was under these circumstances that, in proposing the Navy Estimates on the 18th May, 1857, the First Lord of the Admiralty declared that he could hold out no prospect of being able to reduce the expenditure to the level of former years previous to the war.‡ This drew from the vigilant Mr. Williams

* *Hansard*, cxlii. 1435. † *Hansard*, cxx. 382.

‡ *Hansard*, cxlv. 417.

the remark that they were the most extravagant Estimates since the termination of the great French war; and he added that "the Estimates for 1852-3, the last year of peace before the Russian war, were £2,175,000 less than the Estimates for the present year; and yet this was the second year of peace."*

The First Lord of the Admiralty proceeded to justify his increased estimates by a reference to the navy of our ally and neighbour:—"France," said he, "had been paying the greatest possible attention of late years to the efficiency of her navy;"† and in order to compare the forces of the two countries, he gave the numbers of screw line-of-battle ships and frigates possessed by each, omitting the gun-boats and smaller vessels, in which we possessed an overwhelming superiority, and which had been described in the previous year as "a valuable and effective armament for protecting our shores from assault." They were now alluded to only with the disparaging remark, that "no great naval engagement could be maintained in the middle of the Atlantic between line-of-battle ships and gun-boats." The comparison was stated as follows:—‡

Line-of-battle ships with screws, built and building, 1857.

English, 42.	French, 40

Frigates with screws, built and building.

English, 42.	French, 37.

* *Hansard*, cxlv. 442. † *Hansard*, clxv. 418.

‡ *Hansard*, cxlv. 426.

Lord Clarence Paget, who attracted attention by the ability and professional forethought which characterised his remarks on the comparative value of large and small vessels of war, took exception to the above figures, and said that he held in his hand a list of French screw line-of-battle ships furnished him by the Minister of Marine, and that they amounted altogether to 31; and he reminded the First Lord of a great omission in his statement,—that the "nine screw block-ships, which he had omitted from his enumeration of British ships of the line, were among the most effective of our screw line-of-battle ships. They were the only ships which fired a shot in the Baltic, where the great line-of-battle ships were of no use whatever, and lay off looking on;"* and he added that, taking into account these vessels, our force was nearly double that of France.

It may be well here to say a word or two respecting the origin and purpose of these block-ships, to which repeated allusion will hereafter be made. It was explained by Sir George Cockburn in the House, in 1846, that Sir Robert Peel's Government was induced, in consequence of the creation of a steam navy by France, to appoint a commission to visit all the ports, and see what was necessary to be done for their protection; when it was recommended that a certain number of sailing line-of-battle ships and frigates should be furnished with screws, so as to be able to shift their position, and aid the different batteries if they should be attacked.† This was, in fact,

* *Hansard*, cxlv. 438. † *Hansard*, lxxxvii. 1456.

our first application of the screw propeller to ships of the line; and these block-ships were expressly designed for the protection of our naval arsenals, and the vulnerable points of our coast, against the steam ships of our neighbour. But it will be curious to observe how systematically these vessels are ignored by successive First Lords and Secretaries of the Admiralty, in enumerating our naval resources, even when estimating our means of defence against invasion. The opinions expressed on this subject by the same statesmen when in, and when out of office, will be found to present a singular contrast.

Lord Clarence Paget also called the First Lord's attention to the small vessels which he had forgotten, and declared that "he believed, that had Sir Charles Napier been supplied with gun-boats, he might have damaged Cronstadt very considerably. All his own experience went to show that line-of-battle ships were not now so important an arm in war as they formerly were. Formerly, line-of-battle ships carried heavier guns than other ships; but now every corvette, sloop, and gun-boat carried heavy guns; and he was convinced that no force of large ships could withstand the legion of gun-boats, sloops, and corvettes which they saw at Spithead last year."* Again recurring to the subject, he said "in his opinion, line-of-battle ships were not the instruments by which in future the fate of empires would be decided;" and he proceeded to administer comfort to the alarmists, by showing how different our situation now

*. *Hansard*, cxlv. 438.

was to our "case in the time of Napoleon, who had observed that, if he could only command the Channel for forty-eight hours, he would subjugate this country. He might, however, come to our shores at the present day with seventy or eighty ships of the line, and yet not be enabled to effect a landing in the face of that noble fleet of small vessels which the right honourable baronet had given us within the last few years." He added that "he had the best authority for saying that there was sitting at the present moment in France, an *Enquête*, or Commission, the great object of whose inquiry was to ascertain whether line-of-battle ships were or were not the most efficient class of ships which could now be employed." And he advised the First Lord to "rest upon his oars, and take the opportunity of consulting members of the naval service, before he proceeded to add to the number of those vessels;"*—advice to which, unfortunately, it may be necessary to recur, when the noble Lord is himself filling the office of official representative of the Admiralty in the House of Commons.

In reply to these remarks, Sir Charles Wood, the First Lord of the Admiralty, observed:—"The noble lord (Lord C. Paget) had said that the block-ships were the most efficient ships in the Baltic. It was true that, on account of their light draught of water, they and the gun-boats were so in that case, *and that they would be so in the case of operations on our own coast;* but they would not be safe vessels to send across the Atlantic—they could not keep their place in a cruising squadron."†

* *Hansard*, cxlv. 438-9. † *Hansard*, cxlv. 450.

In the course of this debate, Sir Charles Napier, referring to the comparative numbers of line-of-battle ships, as enumerated by the First Lord, but forgetting the block-ships and floating batteries, and overlooking the gun-boats and mortar-vessels which had been built at his own suggestion, thus raised the cry of alarm:—"The First Lord of the Admiralty," said he, "had told the House that France had forty ships, and we had forty-two only. France was equal to us, therefore, in ships, and superior in the means of manning them. She had an army of 300,000 or 400,000 men, and we had but 20,000 in Great Britain. What would the consequence be if war were to spring up? Why, there would be an invasion immediately."*

A few days after, he thus improved upon this version of the official statement:—"The First Lord of the Admiralty had told them the other night—a thing which no First Lord had ever told them before—that France, in its naval steam power, was equal to ourselves, and that she was able to bring together any number of disciplined men to man her fleets quicker than we could. We were, therefore, no longer the first naval nation in the world."† A week later, the danger is more menacing:—"Let the House look at our condition at the present moment. We had no Channel fleet. In a few months we should not have a line-of-battle ship in England; and, in case of a sudden war with France and Rus-

* *Hansard*, cxlv. 434. † *Hansard*, cxlv. 770.

sia, he did not believe the Queen's throne would be worth six months' purchase."*

The course pursued by this remarkable man towards the close of his career, and the great extent to which his writings and speeches contributed to the creation of the invasion panics, call for a few special observations. On his return to the House of Commons, after being superseded in the command of the Baltic fleet, during the Crimean war, he became possessed by a morbid apprehension, amounting almost to a state of monomania, respecting the threatening attitude of France, and our insufficient means of defence. It was not peculiar to his case, for it is common to all who share his delusion about the danger of an invasion, that he always lost sight of all that was already done, and called for something else as the sole means of security. Thus, he demanded more line-of-battle ships, and ignored the existence of the new force of small vessels; then he called for a Channel fleet, whilst he threw contempt on the block-ships; when the Channel fleet was completed, he declared that the crews were in mutiny from mismanagement; when the number of line-of-battle ships was so great as to extort from him expressions of satisfaction, he asked what was the use of ships without seamen; when the number of seamen voted for our royal navy exceeded that of the entire sea-going population of France, he called aloud for a reserve; and when he had been trium-

* *Hansard*, cxlv. 966.

phant in all his demands, he reverted to the opinion, which he had been one of the first to proclaim, that the whole navy must be reconstructed, for that "a broadside from the modern shell guns would tear holes in the sides of our wooden ships through which it would be easy to drive a wheel-barrow."*

Simultaneously with these calls for defensive armaments arose incessant cries respecting the enormous increase of the French navy. France was always described as in a superior state of preparation, and always menacing us with invasion. To those who sat near him in the House, and shared in his conversation, he would sometimes almost predict the very month when the French might be expected on our shores.

Cherbourg had been always described by him as the chief source of our danger, until the great public visit to that port dispelled the phantom-ships with which he had been haunted; but still he would expatiate on the facilities which its enormous docks and basins offered for embarking an army; declaring on one occasion that "the troops could walk on board; *cavalry, mounted on their horses, could ride on board;* and artillery could easily be shipped, for thirty sail-of-the-line could lie alongside of the wharves alone."† Notwithstanding that he drew on himself occasionally the censure of his brother officers for disparaging our naval strength, and was more than once rebuked for encouraging insubordination among the seamen, he still persevered; and

* *Hansard*, clvi. 1138. † *Hansard*, cl. 1928.

such is the force of reiteration, that he was at last justified in the boast that, although "he had been called an alarmist, and laughed at for many years on that account, he had lived to see his views adopted."*

The question has been asked, whether one whose antecedents had exhibited such reckless courage could have been sincere when raising the cry of alarm on such vague and shadowy pretexts, or whether he was actuated by mere professional motives. It was, however, impossible for those who were in the habit of conversing with him to doubt his earnestness; and the fact of his having recommended an arrangement between the English and French governments for putting a limit to their naval rivalry† is an answer to the suspicion of insincerity. The question admits, perhaps, of a different solution. On the occasion of his bringing his grievance before Parliament, and moving for an inquiry into his conduct in the Baltic, he was answered by Sir Maurice Berkeley, one of the Lords of the Admiralty, who stated, in his presence, that he had advised the removal of Admiral Napier from his command in the Baltic, because "he thought he was totally and physically unfit,—that his nerves were completely gone."‡ This declaration, from sailor to sailor, was at the moment thought to partake of somewhat too much professional bluntness; but it probably offers the true solution of the above question. And this view is confirmed by the fact, that, to the last, on all matters connected with his profes-

* *Hansard*, clvi. 989. † *Hansard*, clvi. 989.
‡ *Hansard*, cxli. 102.

sion, excepting where the question of invasion was involved, the remarks and suggestions of the naval veteran displayed much sagacity and sound sense.

Debility of mind, in one or other of its faculties, like physical decrepitude in some particular organs of the body, is the natural and inevitable accompaniment of old age. It has been observed, too, that, as in the present case, the very faculty for which a man has been most distinguished, may, by an excessive and continued strain, be the first to give way. This, whilst teaching us charity in weighing men's motives, should also induce us, when taking counsel in important matters, to prefer the judgment of those who are in the vigour of their powers, and to mistrust quite as much the timidity of the old as the rashness of the young.

The year 1857 passed without any revival of the excitement out of doors respecting our defences. Scarcely a pamphlet issued from the press on the subject of an invasion. Yet, if we look at the circumstances of the time, there could hardly be imagined a conjuncture when they who believed in the probability of an attack from the other side of the Channel ought to have been more on the alert.

The commencement of 1858 found us involved in a war with China, and in the midst of that formidable rebellion which threatened the overthrow of our dominion in India. Just at the opening of the parliamentary session of that year, occurred the attempt on the Emperor's life, which led to some intemperate manifestations of feeling towards England, on the part of certain French colonels. This

was followed by irritating discussions in the press. One of the first measures of the session was a proposal to alter our law of "conspiracy to murder," with the view of meeting the complaints from France. This conciliatory step led to the fall of Lord Palmerston's ministry in February, and to the return to power of Lord Derby, whose party was at that time considered less favourably disposed than their predecessors towards the French alliance. When we consider that, in addition to these personal elements of provocation, there was the temptation to wrest from us that Eastern empire which is regarded, however mistakenly, on the Continent, as the great source of our wealth and power, we have a combination of motives and of favourable circumstances to invite an attack, such as could never be expected to occur again. Well might Mr. Horsman exclaim, in the following year, that "when he looked back to their condition when the mutiny broke out in India, he must say it was fortunate that at that time it never entered into the mind of any enemy to take advantage of the position of this country:"*—what a misfortune that so intelligent a mind should have failed to draw the only rational deduction from such a fact! Instead of taking advantage of our position, the Emperor's Government offered the facilities of a passage through France for our Indian reinforcements.

A complete calm prevailed in the public mind through the greater part of the year 1858; and the pamphlet literature scarcely takes note of the topic

* *Hansard*, clv. 691.

of a French invasion. The House of Commons was not, however, so entirely quiescent. Lord Derby's Government, on their accession to office, had found the Navy Estimates already prepared by Lord Palmerston's administration, comprising an increase of about 2,000 men. These Estimates, with slight diminutions in the items for building and stores, were adopted and proposed to the House by the new First Lord (Sir John Pakington) on the 12th April. In the debate which followed, there was the usual reference made, by Sir Charles Napier, Mr. Bentinck, Mr. Drummond, and others, to the formidable preparations going on in France, and to the risks of an invasion; when Lord Clarence Paget renewed the advice he had before urged, saying that, "he believed it to be the opinion of the Navy that it would be wise to pause in the construction of these enormous vessels. That opinion was gaining ground in this country, and much more was it gaining ground in France. He had been lately at Paris, and had conversation with French officers on the subject; and, whatever reports the late First Lord of the Admiralty (Sir Charles Wood) might have heard respecting the French Navy, he could give him positive information that, so far from there being any activity in building large ships, they were waiting to see what would be done in this country. He was persuaded, and it was the general opinion of the naval profession, that line-of-battle ships were not destined to play an important part in future naval wars. It was believed that these ships would be superseded in the line of battle, and more particu-

larly in attacking forts, by ships with one tier of heavy guns, and their sides cased with iron. He believed with the hon. and gallant Admiral, the member for Southwark (Sir C. Napier), that in ten years three-deckers would be unknown, being cut down into single-deck ships; and, holding that opinion, he thought it was a wasteful expenditure of the public money to go on, year by year, constructing that class of vessels."*

These views were controverted by Lord Palmerston, who alluded to the measures which the French Government were taking to give France a fleet of screw line-of-battle ships, very nearly equal to our own. He also spoke of Cherbourg as being "as large as many of our dockyards taken together;" and twitted Lord Clarence Paget with his credulity, telling him that he was "not sure that opinions, coming from what must be called the rival service of other countries, were exactly the opinions by which the Government of this country ought to guide their conduct."† He deprecated any reduction in the Estimates for building; and urged that "the most pressing application of the funds voted for the naval service, was in providing ships, which when once built will remain, rather than in employing men, who, after the year is over, will not add to your strength next year, unless the expense is continued:"‡ —a doctrine which, as the recent transitions in our navy show, ought to be received with great caution.

* *Hansard*, cxlix. 929-30. † *Hansard*, cxlix. 936.
‡ *Hansard*, cxlix. 938.

These allusions to the preparations of our neighbours met with no response out of doors; and little more was said during the session,—with one constant exception:—Sir Charles Napier, on the 11th June, addressed a speech to the House, in the form of a long question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the subject of our national defences, in which, among other terrors of the imagination, he pictured a Russian fleet coming up the Channel, and exclaimed, amid the laughter of the House, "what would become of the Funds; God only knew."* The Minister, in reply, complained that he had had to listen to three speeches in the session, on the same subject, from the same speaker.

The year 1859 witnessed the apparition of the third panic. Towards the close of 1858, and up to the meeting of Parliament in February, there had been some efforts made, by a certain portion of the press, to excite apprehensions respecting the magnitude of the naval preparations of France; but they produced little effect on the public mind. Unlike its predecessors, this panic had its origin chiefly in elevated and official circles. It was from the first a parliamentary agitation: nor was it confined to the Lower House; for, as will be seen, the most successful agitators were those of the patrician order, who played with consummate skill on the most sensitive chord in the national heart, by raising the cry of alarm for our naval superiority.

The Queen's Speech, at the opening of Parliament,

* *Hansard*, cl. 1930.

announced an increase of expenditure for the "reconstruction of the British Navy."

On the day previous to that fixed for bringing on the Navy Estimates, Sir Charles Napier rose in the House, and said he "wished to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it was true that a French steam *aviso*, with two French cutters, had entered Spithead a few nights ago; and that, after the exchange of a few words of courtesy, these vessels had proceeded to Stokes Bay in the night, and had taken soundings there? Also, whether he knew that these vessels had more than the usual complement of officers?"* The reply was, of course, that they were employed in the performance of their duty, in looking after the French fishermen.

Before we come to the proposal for a sudden and large increase of the Navy, on the plea that the Government had discovered, in the summer of 1858, that the French were making extraordinary progress in their naval armaments, it will be well to recur for a moment to the tables in the first page. The following is an extract of the number of men, the amount of wages in dockyards, and the total expenditure for the Navy in England and France, for the year 1858:—

	Seamen.	Wages, etc., Dockyards.	Total Expenditure.	
		£	£	
England . . .	55,883	991,592	10,029,047	1858
France . . .	29,602	640,954	5,337,060	1858

It will be seen that our total expenditure amounted

* *Hansard*, clii. 771.

to nearly double that of France; but, owing to the difference in the modes of keeping the accounts in the two countries, as already explained, this is not a fair mode of comparison. The amount expended for wages in dockyards is a better test; and, under this head, the English expenditure is fifty per cent more than that of France. But the truest standard of comparison is the number of seamen, of whom we had nearly double the French force. If we cast our eye back over the French tables, we shall find that the number of men maintained in 1847, the last year of the reign of Louis Philippe, amounted to 32,169, or 2,567 more than in 1858. The average number of the French Navy, for the last ten years of Louis Philippe's reign, was 31,335, or 1,733 more than in 1858. It will be seen, also, that the number of ships in commission, in the latter years of the monarchy, exceeded those of 1858. On the other hand, looking back over the British accounts, we shall find no year, previous to the Crimean war, in which our seamen approached within 10,000 of the number voted for 1858. And, more important than all, it will be seen that, during the whole preceding period of twenty-three years, the number of our seamen had never been so much in excess of those of France as in 1858.

The above statement is more than confirmed by an official document, which was in the hands of the First Lord when he brought forward his Estimates, but which was not laid on the table of the House until the following April. It is entitled, "Report of a Committee, appointed by the Treasury,

to inquire into the Navy Estimates from 1852 to 1858, and into the Comparative State of the Navies of England and France." In this document it is said that "France founds her calculations upon a return to her peace establishment of 1852; the number of her ships in commission for 1859 being 152 against 175 in the year 1852; and the number of seamen afloat being 25,784, against 25,016 in 1852." This gives an increase of 768 men. The Report then proceeds to give a corresponding comparison of the British Navy:—"Our position is very different. On the 1st of December, 1858, our ships in commission, and their complements, as compared with 1852, were as follows:—

	Ships.	Guns.	Seamen.
1st December, 1858	267	4649	47,953
1st December, 1852	203	3584	36,372
Increase.	64	1065	11,581

This number is exclusive of a further increase of 3,302 marines on shore, including 1,800 employed on shore in China; also of 3,880 seamen, employed in the coast-guard on shore; making a total increase in 1858, as compared with 1852, of 18,763 seamen and marines."* Thus it appears, from our own official Report, that whilst France had added to her force, afloat, in six years, 768 men, we had added to ours, afloat and on shore, 18,763; and that whilst, on the 1st December, 1858, the navy of England

* *Parliamentary Paper*, No. 182, 1859, p. 22.

numbered 55,135 men, that of France, afloat, contained only 25,784, or considerably less than one-half. When viewed by the light of these facts, the tone of excitement and alarm which pervades the following statement becomes simply incomprehensible.

On the 25th February, 1859, the Navy Estimates were brought forward by the First Lord of the Admiralty (Sir John Pakington), who asked for an addition of £1,200,000 for ship-building, and proposed a vote of 62,400 men and boys, being the largest number ever maintained in a time of peace. He stated that, when he succeeded to office, he "did not find the navy of this country in a proper and adequate state for the defence of our coasts, and the protection of our commerce;" he invited the House to "aid him in his attempt to restore the naval supremacy of England;" spoke of our having "fallen to the lowest amount ever known in our history—an amount not exceeding that of a neighbouring power, (!) without anything like the same demand upon its force;"* he pleaded "the present aspect of public affairs" in justification of his proposal, alleging that "the Government would not have done their duty to the country, if they had not boldly asked for the increase of force."†

But, not confining himself to these generalities, he stated that during the summer the Government had thought it their duty to ascertain the state of the French navy. They had heard much of the progress

* *Hansard*, clii. 882—912. † *Hansard*, ib.

made by France in increasing her naval armament during the last few years, and, having taken means for ascertaining the facts, they had found that the line-of-battle ships in France were exactly the same in number as our own, namely twenty-nine. He calculated that, at the progress then making, France would, at the end of the year 1859, have forty* line-of-battle ships, and England only thirty-six. When this was brought under his notice in July, he consulted his colleagues, and they determined that it "was a state of things which could not be allowed to continue;" and they resolved immediately to withdraw sufficient workmen from other occupations to convert four sailing line-of-battle ships into screws; and he now proposed to the House that five additional liners should be forthwith converted.† At the same time, he entered into a similar statement respecting frigates, in which he was sorry to say that our position was, in comparison, still more unsatisfactory; and that in the course of the autumn he had found that, whilst we were in possession of thirty-four of these vessels, France had forty-six.‡

Now, it was not this statement in itself—incomplete and inaccurate as it will be shown to be—so much as the manner of making it, which tended to produce the subsequent alarm and panic. A tone of myste-

* On the 11th April, 1861, more than two years later, we shall find Lord Clarence Paget, then Secretary of the Admiralty, stating in the House that France had only thirty-seven screw line-of-battle ships built and building.—*Hansard*, clxii. 442.

† *Hansard*, clii. 882-912. ‡ *Hansard*, clii. 908.

rious revelation pervaded the speech, the effect of which was heightened by repeated protestations of frankness; whilst a protentous significance was imparted to the proposed naval augmentations by such assertions as that "it was inconsistent with our naval power, and with our national safety and dignity, that we should allow such a state of things to continue,"* and still more by the solemn adjurations which followed, invoking the Anglo-French alliance "for the sake of England and for the sake of the world." And yet, in fact, there was no secret to reveal, for the French Government had, in 1857, published to the whole world the programme of its future naval constructions for a period of thirteen years, founded on the report of a commission appointed in 1855. "The First Lord and his coadjutors," says the author of a volume containing much valuable information, when commenting on this speech, "had only discovered six months previously what was long before patent enough to anyone who had taken the trouble to investigate the subject."† The House of Commons, however, offered no opposition when the First Lord finally announced his intention to add twenty-six men-of-war to the navy in one year.‡

This speech furnished arguments for the following twelve-months to those who were employed in exciting the invasion panic. The statement which was most

* *Hansard*, clii. 906.

† *The Navies of the World*, by HANS BUSK, p. 85.

‡ *Hansard*, clii. 942.

frequently quoted, and which became the favourite text for the alarmists, was that which placed England and France on an equality of twenty-nine line-of-battle ships each. This was arrived at by a departure from the invariable mode of comparison, by which the ships built and building are taken into account. On referring back to the comparative numbers of these vessels given by Sir Charles Wood on the 18th May, 1857, it will be seen that he states the English at forty-two, and the French at forty.* They are now reduced to twenty-nine each, by taking only the numbers actually completed at the moment. Had the comparison been made in the usual manner, it would have stood as follows, according to the Parliamentary paper in the First Lord's hands :†—

Line-of-Battle Ships built and building, December, 1858.

	English.	French.
Complete, hull and machinery	29	29
Receiving engines	4	2
Converting	7	4
Building	10	5
Total	50	40

Adding the nine coast-guard blockships to the English column, it gives fifty-nine, to forty French.

The total omission of the coast-guard vessels from the First Lord's numerical statement of the line-of-battle ships and frigates possessed by the two countries calls for a few words of remark. It has

* *Ante*, p. 277. † *Parliamentary Paper*, 182, 1859, p. 15.

been already shown that nine line-of-battle ships have been set apart for the protection of our arsenals and harbours. They mount, in the aggregate, about 600 guns, each vessel being "armed with 8-inch shell guns and 32-pounders, together with two 68-pounders and four 10-inch shell guns."*

These vessels are assigned to particular stations on the coast, though occasionally a paragraph in the newspapers informs us that they are mustered as a squadron in the Channel.† But wherever they may be, it will be found, on turning over the pages of the Navy List, and referring to the "Majestic," "Blenheim," "Cornwallis," etc., that these block-ships

* Paper read at the Society of Arts, by Mr. E. J. Reed, late of H.M.'s Dockyard, Portsmouth, 15th Dec., 1858, p. 15.

† The Blockships.—Commodore Yelverton's fleet of coast-guard block-ships, consisting of the Majestic, 80, Capt. Mends, C. B.; Blenheim, 60, Capt. Tatham; Cornwallis, 60, Capt. Randolph; Edinburgh, 60, Capt. D'Eyncourt; Hawke, 60, Capt. Crispin; Hogue, 60, Capt. Macdonald; Russell, 60, Capt. Wodehouse; Ajax, 60, Capt. Boyd; and the screw steam-frigate Dauntless, 34, Capt. Heath, C.B., after being duly inspected, as previously announced, by Admiral Eden and Capt. Frederick, two of the Lords of the Admiralty, left Portland harbour on Wednesday and Thursday for their respective stations. The Colossus, 80, Capt. Scott, C.B., still bearing the flag of Commodore Yelverton, remains at anchor in that harbour, but is expected to leave for the Isle of Wight in a day or two. The Biter gunboat, tender to the Colossus, is also at Portland.—*Times.*

The Channel fleet of blockships were observed at Plymouth at noon on Sunday, approaching from the eastward. At five p.m. they were near the Eddystone, going down Channel under three foresails, jib, and spanker. Wind, north-west. Eleven ships in all; one a frigate.—*Herald*

carry their full complement of captain, lieutenants, chaplain, staff surgeon, paymasters, engineers, etc.; and we are told that crews of picked seamen, the veterans of the fleet, are provided for them. Yet these vessels, with their satellite fleet of gun-boats, are left altogether out of the numerical comparison of the English and French navies; they are not counted as line-of-battle ships, or even thrown into the scale to weigh against our neighbour's paddle frigates.

Now, if it could be shown that these ships are worthless, as some of our officials would seem to imply, what must be thought of the wisdom of those who incur from year to year all the current expenses of officering, manning, and arming in the most efficient manner, vessels which are afterwards to count for nothing? The French, however, form a very different estimate of the value of our coast-guard fleet, as the following extract from a work published under the sanction of their Government will show:*—

"The service of the coast-guard is placed under the general direction of a Commodore of the first class, having the 'Pembroke' for his flag-ship. It includes seventy-three vessels, twenty-seven of which are steamers, and forty-six sailing vessels. All the coast has been divided into eleven districts, each commanded by a captain, having under his orders a certain number of officers;—this staff amounts altogether to more than 250 officers of all grades. Nine

* '*The Army and Navy Budgets of France and England*,' by M. Cucheval Clarigny, p. 67.

ships-of-the-line and two frigates watch the eleven districts. With the exception of one, all these vessels are mixed: that is, old sailing vessels, having had machinery adapted to them; their armaments and masts have been reduced, so as to diminish their draft, and render them more manageable. The ships-of-the-line have sixty guns, the frigates fifty. Sixteen steam gun-boats and forty-seven vessels of light draft have been distributed between the eleven districts. It is quite a fleet, destined to a special service, and on board of which the manœuvres and the gun practice take place as regularly as on board of other vessels of war. The blockships offer to England, for the defence of her harbours and dockyards, means of defence which are entirely wanting in France."

It was by the total omission of this powerful fleet, in the enumeration of the forces of the two countries, that the statement of the First Lord startled the country, and furnished the "cry" to the alarmists—the echo of which has hardly yet died away—that France was our equal in line-of-battle ships, and was aiming at the supremacy of the seas.

The comparison of the number of frigates possessed by the two countries was hardly less fallacious than that of the ships of the line. In stating that England possessed fewer of these vessels than France, the faintest possible allusion was made to the immense superiority in tonnage and horse-power of the majority of our frigates; whilst the numerical comparison alone reached the eye of the general public. The French Navy List contains fifteen vessels classed

as paddle-frigates, which were built nearly twenty years ago for the transatlantic packet service, and on the failure of that enterprise were transferred to the Government navy in 1844-5.* The very age of these vessels renders it unnecessary to speak of their quality. They carry sixteen guns, and, for comparison, they are put on an equality with our screw frigates of forty or fifty guns, some of which are of a larger tonnage than the line-of-battle ships of half a century ago! And, whilst these antique tubs are thus paraded to the terror of Englishmen, no credit is taken for our own splendid packet ships, which would be available, in case of emergency, in a few weeks; and some of which, as the Persia, for example, are more than double the tonnage, and of far greater speed, than these converted "frigates" of the French navy.

But the gravest fallacy in the First Lord's statement has still to be noticed. Why was the comparison restricted to ships of the line and frigates? The old nomenclature no longer serves for an accurate definition of the strength of ships of war. We had at the time fourteen vessels called screw-corvettes, of from 20 to 22 guns each, in our Navy list, far more powerful than the above 16-gun frigates, whilst the French had only two of this class; and we had a dozen screw-sloops, of from 12 to 17 guns, of which

* "France had, about the close of 1844, grafted into their navy twenty or twenty-two ships, varying from 1500 to 1700 tons, and about 450 horse power. Those ships had been built for Transatlantic packets."—*Evidence of Sir Thomas Hastings before Committee on Army, Navy, and Ordnance*, 1848, Qu. 9797.

the French had none; but these vessels were wholly kept out of view. Had the comparison been extended to all steam vessels, we should have shown an overwhelming superiority in these smaller ships, which were the pride of the Spithead Review, and had extorted so many eulogies from professional men. The First Lord did not omit to offer a passing compliment to this portion of our navy; but he found no place for it in his numerical comparison of the forces of the two nations, and it was this numerical comparison which was seized upon to promote the panic out of doors. The following figures, taken from the Parliamentary Paper* to which attention has been already called, will show what the comparison would have been if it had embraced the smaller vessels:— England had eighty-two corvettes and sloops, and France twenty-two: England had 162 gunboats, and France twenty-eight. If, after comparing the line-of-battle ships and frigates, there had been a comparison of the whole of the other steam vessels, the result would have been 380 English and 174 French.

The fact of our having built so many more small vessels than the French will partly, but not wholly, account for our not possessing a larger proportion of screw line-of-battle ships. England had, for a long series of years, been spending, at the very least, fifty per cent. more on the effective strength of her navy than France, and this ought to be a sufficient answer to the assertion that France had been aiming at an equality with us at sea. We build ships, construct steam-engines and machinery, and obtain coals and

* *Parliamentary Paper*, 182, 1859.

other stores twenty or thirty per cent. cheaper than our neighbours, and we ought, therefore, to secure a proportionately larger return for our outlay.* *But these advantages are more than counterbalanced by the superior management of the naval department in France, by which they are enabled to avoid the waste of money, which is always going on in this country, upon unnecessary and useless constructions.* This will be illustrated by a brief examination of the valuable parliamentary document to which reference has already been repeatedly made.

It was stated to the House, by the First Lord of the Admiralty, that a Confidential Committee had been appointed in the winter of 1858, by Lord Derby's Government, to inquire into the comparative state of the navies of England and France. The Report of this Committee, dated January 6th, 1859, and intended, originally, for the eye of the Ministry only, was laid on the table of the House on the 3rd April following. The inquiry extended from 1852 to 1858. The reader may be reminded that Lord Derby's Administration was succeeded by that of Lord Aberdeen in the autumn of 1852; and that on the fall of Lord Palmerston's ministry, in February, 1858, the Conservative chief again returned to power. The

* The late Lord Herbert, who had been three years Secretary to the Admiralty, in his evidence before the Select Committee on the Navy, in 1848, said, "I should never dream of instituting a comparison between our expenditure and that of France; because their expenditure is so lavish, and the result for the money spent so very small, that you cannot institute a comparison between them."—Q. 10126.

Report embraces this interval; and is, therefore, an inquiry instituted by one body of politicians, into the management of the navy during nearly six years by their opponents; and it would not imply any great ignorance of the inner play of party, to suppose that, under such circumstances, we might find some hints, or disclosures, which would not be met with in a Report of one of the ordinary Commissions, appointed by a Government to inquire into its own conduct. It is difficult to believe that, if this document had been in the hands of members of Parliament before the First Lord had made his statement on the 25th February, they would have allowed their attention to be diverted across the Channel to the acts of a neighbouring government, instead of being directed towards their naval administration at home.

Shortly previous to 1852, the English and French Governments had been brought to the conviction that sailing ships of the line could no longer be depended on for purposes of war; and, after the experience of the Crimean campaign, they ceased to be taken into account in a comparison of the forces of the two countries. From 1852 to 1858 was, therefore, a period of transition from a sailing to a steam fleet. In 1852, England had 73 sailing-vessels of the line, and France 45.* In 1859, the country was startled by the First Lord's statement that France had 29 screw liners, whilst England possessed only the same number. How did this arise? The Report, after giving a mass of most valuable

* *Parliamentary Paper*, 182, 1859, p. 18.

facts and statistics, goes straight to the point, and states that "the large increase of the French steam navy, since 1852, in line-of-battle ships and frigates, has been effected mainly by the conversion of sailing ships;" that "the number of men required to convert a three-decker into a 90-gun steam-ship is stated to be five-eighths of the number required to build a new 90-gun steam-ship. The chief difference in the cost of conversion arises from the saving in materials. The cost of converting a line-of-battle ship of 90 guns is estimated at £25,000, and the cost of building the same at £105,000; but the latter will, of course, be a far more efficient and durable vessel;" that "the process of conversion, on the other hand, is speedy as compared with that of building. The present seems a state of transition, as regards naval architecture, inducing the French Government to suspend the laying down of new ships of the line altogether, and it is more especially so with respect to artillery."* The Report states that "*no line-of-battle ship has been laid down since* 1855, *in France, and there has not been a single three-decker on the stocks since that year;*" and that of the forty-five sailing vessels, which France possessed in 1852, and of which ten remained in 1858, there were two only which were not "too old to be converted."†

In the mean time, England had pursued the double process of building new and converting old ships of the line. Between 1852 and 1858, we launched twenty-three liners. "Of the line-of-battle ships now

* *Parliamentary Paper*, 182, 1859, p. 21. † *Ibid.* p. 19.

building in the English dockyards," says the Report, "one was laid down in 1855, two in 1856, one in 1857, and four in 1858."* At the time when these last four were laid down, we had thirty-five sailing-ships of the line afloat, of which nineteen are reported by the Surveyor of the Navy to be convertible into screw liners or frigates. He states, also, that we possessed seventy sailing frigates, of which twenty-seven were convertible.†

Now, inasmuch as the fitting of steam-engines into existing sailing-ships is a much cheaper and more expeditious process than building new steamers, and leaving sailing vessels to rot in ordinary, it was only natural that the conversion of a sailing into a steam fleet should proceed more rapidly in the French than in the English dockyards. The obvious remedy was to follow the thrifty example of our neighbours; and this was the recommendation of the Report, which was made, at the same time, to convey, in language sufficiently intelligible, a censure on the conduct of the previous administration:— "We, therefore, venture to suggest, for your Lordships' consideration, whether, if the force in the dockyards were to be used next year in the conversion of ships of the line and frigates, as far as the available dock accommodation will admit, the most useful results might not be attained at a comparatively small expenditure."‡

We have seen that, in conformity with this Report, the First Lord announced to the House his inten-

* *Parliamentary Paper*, 182, 1859, p. 19. † *Ibid.* p. 20.
‡ *Ibid.* p. 21.

tion to convert nine sailing line-of-battle ships into screw steamers, and he reserved other four for the next year. If this had been done, as it should have been, at the time when the French were similarly employed, and if the nine Coast-guard vessels had been taken into account, where would have been the pretext for a panic? But it is hardly reasonable to hold the French Government responsible for a state of things which arose out of the maladministration of our own affairs, and which the Minister of Marine could have no power of remedying, except by lowering his own management to the level of that of our Admiralty.

In order to illustrate the foregoing statement, the following figures are extracted from this Report.

As it has been the custom to estimate the strength of a navy by the number of its line-of-battle ships, it will be well, in the first place, to give the particulars of this class of vessels.

Comparative Numbers of English and French Line-of-battle Ships, in the Years 1852 *and* 1858.*

1852.

	English.
Sailing Vessels	73
Steam Vessels, afloat and building	17
Block Ships	4
Total	94

	French.
Sailing Vessels	45
Steam Vessels, afloat and building	6
Total	51

* *Parliamentary Paper*, 182, 1859, pp. 17—19.

1858.

			English.
Sailing Vessels			35
Steamers Complete	29		
„ Receiving Engines	4		50
„ Building	10		
„ Converting	7		
Block Ships			9
Total			94

			French.
Sailing Vessels			10
Steamers Complete	29		
„ Receiving Engines	2		40
„ Building	5		
„ Converting	4		
Total			50

It will be seen, by comparison, that, instead of our having lost ground in ships of the line in six years, the total number of French vessels, sailing and steam, bore a smaller proportion by one to the English, in 1858 than in 1852. As an illustration of the economical example which the Minister of Marine had given to our Admiralty, by the conversion of sailing-ships into steamers, it will be observed that, whilst France had reduced the number of her sailing vessels from forty-five to ten, or more than three-fourths, England had only diminished hers from seventy-three to thirty-five, or little more than one-half.

It should be always borne in view, that we are not discussing the process of creating a navy, but of substituting one kind of ship for another. The fol-

lowing list of the numbers of line-of-battle ships possessed by the two countries at various epochs is interesting, as showing the number of sailing vessels formerly maintained by France. It appears that the French force, as measured by this class of vessels, has generally been equal to rather more than the half of our own; and this seems to have been tacitly accepted by the two countries as a fair proportion for nearly a century, with the exception of that period of humiliation for France which immediately succeeded the restoration of the Bourbons.

Numbers of Line-of-Battle Ships in the English and French Navies at the following Dates :—

	British.	French.
1778	126	68
1794	145	77
1830	106	53
1840	89	44
1850	86	45
1858	94	50

The totals of the steamers of all sizes in the two navies were as follows in the years 1852 and 1858:—

1852 British Steamers of all sizes	176
1858 „ „	464
British Increase	288
1852 French Steamers of all sizes	122
1858 „ „	264
French Increase	142

Thus, whilst in six years the French added 142

steamers of all kinds to their navy, we added more than double the number to ours.

The following are the totals of both steamers and sailing vessels of all sizes in the two navies at the same dates:—

1852	British Steamers of all sizes	176
„	„ Sailing vessels, ditto	299
	Total	475
1858	British Steamers of all sizes	464
„	„ Sailing vessels, ditto	296
	Total	760
	British Increase	285
1852	French Steamers of all sizes	122
„	„ Sailing vessels, ditto	258
	Total	380
1858	French Steamers of all sizes	264
„	„ Sailing vessels, ditto	144
	Total	408
	French Increase	28

It is very instructive to observe the above numbers of sailing vessels in the two countries at both periods. In 1852, England possessed 299 of these vessels, which were reduced to 296 in 1858, being a diminution of three only. France possessed 258 sailing vessels in 1852, which were reduced to 144 in 1858, being a diminution of 114. These figures show that whilst France was engaged in converting her sailing vessels into steamers, England continued the processes of both building and converting. The consequence

was that we had as many sailing vessels, within 3, in 1858 as in 1852; and whilst France had increased the total number of her vessels, of all kinds, by 28 only, England had augmented hers by 285. That these figures* prove an enormous amount of misapplied capital and labour in our dockyards, and place us, in point of management, in humiliating contrast with our neighbour, there can be no doubt.

Sir Charles Wood, the preceding First Lord, felt, probably, that some of Sir John Pakington's statements glanced obliquely upon him, and on the 6th April he entered at length upon a vindication of his management. It is interesting to find him, in opposition, not only gathering up all the elements of our naval strength, including block-ships and gun-boats, which had been overlooked when the Estimates were brought forward in 1857, but disputing the pretensions of our neighbours, who had received such flattering eulogies on that occasion. "I would, however," said he,† "remind the House that they must not suppose that all the French ships are as fine sea-going ships as our new line-of-battle ships. There is one of them, I know, the *Montebello*, which has only 140 horse-power; while the weakest of our block-ships‡ has 200 horse-power. I say that, for

* They have been wholly taken from the Report. *Parliamentary Paper*, No. 182. 1859. † *Hansard*, cliii. 1462.

‡ There is something almost dramatic in the transformation of opinion which is sometimes produced by the removal from the official to the opposition benches, and *vice versâ*. On the 18th May, 1857, Sir Charles Wood, the First Lord, in bringing forward the Navy Estimates, stated that France had forty and Eng-

the defence of our coasts at least, these block-ships are good and efficient, and as available for that service as many of the French ships of the line are for attack. In considering our means of defence, I must, however, be allowed to take into account the numerous vessels of a smaller class which we possessed, and which, as the noble member for Sandwich (Lord Clarence Paget) said, no line-of-battle ships could resist."

Here was an excellent case established against any additional armaments: but, as the speaker gave a ready approval to the proposed increase of the Estimates, his argument was only calculated to inspire the public mind with still greater mistrust.

The better to understand the state of feeling in 1859, it is necessary to recur to the events which were then passing around us. Hostilities had commenced between France and Austria. The operations of the French army in Italy were watched with no friendly eye by the upper and conservative classes

land forty-two screw-liners. On the 12th April, 1858, Sir John Pakington, who had just succeeded to the office of First Lord, alluding to this statement of his predecessor, said—"it was not fair to exclude the block-ships, as you must do when you say that you have only two line-of-battle ships more than the French." On the 25th February, 1859, Sir John Pakington, in moving his Navy Estimates, stated that France had twenty-nine, and England had also twenty-nine screw line-of-battle ships, totally omitting the block-ships. On the 6th April following, Sir Charles Wood, then in opposition, reminded the First Lord of this omission, and contended that the block-ships were good and efficient for the defence of the coast.

of this country, whose sympathies were generally on the side of Austria. On the contrary, with the mass of the people, the government of Vienna was supremely unpopular, whilst an universal enthusiasm prevailed in favour of Italian independence. And although, undoubtedly, some mistrust was entertained towards the absolute ruler of France, in his new character of champion of the nationalities, still, for the sake of Italy, the popular sympathy followed the march of the French armies. At the same time a suspicion arose (the despatches of Lord Malmesbury not having been published) that our Conservative government was pledging us to the side of the Austrians; and hence was witnessed the strange spectacle, for England, of public meetings called to proclaim the principle of non-intervention, which, truly interpreted, meant a protest against the interference of our Government on the wrong side.

This explanation may help to account for the fact that the loudest notes of alarm and hostility against France resounded from that usually serene and impassive body, the House of Lords. They did not avowedly espouse or defend the cause of Austria: public opinion was too strong in the opposite direction; but to proclaim the danger of an invasion of England, and thus to rouse the hostile passions of the country against the French Emperor, would act, to some extent, as a diversion in favour of his antagonist; and he is said, by those who were in a position to be well-informed on the subject, to have been so far influenced by the hostile attitude manifested in high quarters in this country, that it operated, among

other things, disadvantageously to the Italian cause, in bringing the campaign to a precipitate close. The most inveterate alarmist might have rested satisfied that, as the Emperor had allowed us to escape two years before, when we were involved in our Indian difficulty, he would not seek a rupture just at the moment when his own hands were so fully occupied in Italy. He knew that a war with England meant a campaign on the Rhine, as well as on the Mincio, with British subsidies to Austria and Germany, and a naval war extending to every sea. Yet this was the fate to which, in the eyes of panic-stricken peers, he was rushing, impelled—in the absence of every rational motive—by his destiny!

On the first of July, the Volunteer Corps and the Navy Estimates became the subjects of discussion in the Upper House. So much did the debate turn upon the question of invasion, that, at the first glance, it might be thought that we were not only at war with our next neighbour, but at the very crisis of a long struggle. Lord Ellenborough called for seventy line-of-battle ships; but declared that no increase of the Navy could, under present circumstances, protect us against invasion; that for "six months in the year, an enemy may land 60,000 to 80,000 men on any beach on the south coast of England." With his wonted proneness to strategy, he called for forts to protect "all the ports, and all the roads in which it would be possible for an enemy to place a fleet, with any degree of security, and where he might form *têtes-de-pont* that would assist his future operations;" and he particularly pointed to Portland,

"that port which the late French ambassador went down to reconnoitre, and which he took the trouble of visiting at the end of last summer, in order to see the particular advantages it possessed. He trusted that, whenever that respectable gentleman went to that port again, he would find it in a better position than when he saw it last."*

Lord Howden, who said "he resided in France, and his social relations were chiefly in that country," declared that the entire population of that empire were eager for the invasion of England, regardless of the consequences:—

"He did not believe that the idea of conquering this country had ever entered into the head of any sane Frenchman, any more than that any sane Englishman had ever entertained the notion that we should allow ourselves to be conquered by France. He felt assured that no Frenchman had ever dreamt of taking possession of this island; but he felt almost equally certain that every Frenchman living dreamt both by day and by night of humiliating this country, and robbing her of the position which she alone maintained among the nations of Europe, that of possessing an inviolate soil. Thousands of persons in England scouted the very thought of an invasion. They asked, 'What is the use of it?—it could have no permanent result.' The people of France were aware that it could not; but then they did not adopt the same mode of reasoning on the subject. A forlorn hope might enter some miserable village, in-

* *Hansard*, cliv. 532.

habited by six fishermen and a ploughboy: a bulletin might be signed on British soil, proclaiming the glorious triumph of French arms: the French eagles might stream from every steeple from Acton to Ealing and from Ealing to Harrow—the very prospect was enough to throw every Frenchman into a transport of joy; and that, too, although he might be perfectly aware that not a single one of his countrymen would return home to tell the tale." He declared that a war against England would unite, in one body, Republicans, Imperialists, Orleanists, and Legitimists, and in conclusion said:—"Such a war was the only one which would ever be universally popular in France; and, however reckless the attempt to invade England might be—however devoid of all rational hope of success—there was not a single widow in France who would not give her last son, or a single beggar who would not give his last penny to carry out such a project."* Lord Brougham controverted this view, and said he believed, on the contrary, that no act of the French Government could excite greater indignation among all classes of the French people than a quarrel with England. But he, too, called for increased preparations by land and sea.† Lord Hardwicke, with natural professional gallantry, would not listen to the plan of land defences, or tolerate the idea of an invasion; he was for carrying the war to the enemy's coasts:—"He held that it was the duty of the Government to render the navy of England sufficiently powerful not only to main-

* *Hansard*, cliv. 517. † *Hansard*, ib. 524.

tain the British Channel as the British Channel, but to enable us to insist that the boundaries of this country in that direction should be the low-water mark on the French shore."*

But the great speech of the session on this subject, and that which for a fortnight fluttered the fashionable world and agitated the clubs, has yet to be noticed. On the 5th July Lord Lyndhurst brought forward the subject of the national defences. He began his argument by repeating the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty, that "France exceeded us the year before in a small proportion in line-of-battle ships, but she exceeded us in an enormous proportion in steam frigates." Without one word of reference to the coast-guard fleet or floating batteries; or the small vessels, in which our superiority could be reckoned by hundreds, and which, as the naval authorities only two years before declared, rendered a landing on our shores impossible; or the scores of large ocean steamers in the employ of private companies, he brings the two "fleets" into combat in the Channel, and argues that, in case of defeat, we have no reserve to prevent an immense military force from being landed on our shores. The "fleets" are brought also into collision in the Mediterranean and elsewhere; but no allusion is made to the existence of any other than ships of the line and frigates. He cites Lord Palmerston's "very emphatic words, that steam has converted the Channel into a river, and thrown a bridge across it;" and he argues that "a

* *Hansard*, cliv. 528.

large army may within a few hours—in the course of a single night—be landed on any part of our shores." "I know," said he, "from information which I have received, and the accuracy of which I do not doubt, that the French are at the present moment building steamers for the purpose of transporting troops, each of which is constructed to carry 2500 men; with all the necessary stores. This, therefore, is the description of force which you must prepare yourselves to meet." He called for an establishment of 100,000 troops and embodied militia, and the same number of disembodied and trained militia, "in order to be prepared for any emergency which may arise." He avowed that he felt something like a sentiment of humiliation in going through these details. "I recollect," said he, "the day when every part of the opposite coast was blockaded by an English fleet. I remember the victory of Camperdown, and that of St. Vincent, won by Sir John Jervis; I do not forget the great victory of the Nile, nor, last of all, that triumphant fight at Trafalgar, which almost annihilated the navies of France and Spain. I contrast the position which we occupied at that period with that which we now hold. I recollect the expulsion of the French from Egypt; the achievement of victory after victory in Spain; the British army established in the south of France; and, last of all, that great victory by which the war was terminated." Interspersed among these irritating reminiscences were such remarks as—"I will not consent to live in dependence on the friendship or forbearance of any country;" "are we to sit supine on our own shores, and not

prepare the means necessary in case of war to resist that power?"*—remarks which, considering our overwhelming naval superiority at the time, can be compared only to the act of brandishing a weapon in the face of a friendly neighbour.

Fully to comprehend the scope and temper of these utterances, which were received by the assembled peers with a rapturous welcome, it is necessary to consider for a moment the circumstances under which the speech was delivered. The speaker represented more than any other peer the legal and constitutional character of the Upper House. His judicial mind and great age tended naturally to impart a tone of moderation and caution to his observations; and he was commenting on the policy of a nation with whom we were at peace, and from whose Sovereign our Government had received numerous proofs of friendship. Nor must the circumstances in which the two countries were at the moment placed be overlooked. France had hardly emerged from a war for an object in which the British nation had long felt the deepest sympathy,—and for the outbreak of which the statesmen of both our political parties held Austria responsible,—and she had incurred an exhaustive sacrifice of life and treasure which contributed, with other considerations, to bring the struggle to an early and unexpected close. At the same time, our own naval preparations were on a scale of unparalleled magnitude for a time of peace. Taking the average of the years 1858-9, it will be seen, on reference to the accounts

* *Hansard*, cliv. 617—27.

in the first page, that the number of our seamen was more than double that of the French navy — a disproportion quite unexampled during the last thirty years. It was under these circumstances, and when not an act or word on the part of the French Government indicated a hostile disposition, that the foremost man in the highest assembly of Englishmen delivered, amidst enthusiastic plaudits, the speech of which the above is a brief outline. If England had been a weak country, threatened with invasion by a powerful enemy, nothing could have been more calculated to stir the patriotism of its inhabitants than to remind them of the exploits of their fathers; but to declaim of Trafalgar and the Nile,—to taunt with their reverses a brave people who were no longer our enemies but our friends,—was more derogatory to ourselves than to the object of those taunts. It must be acknowledged that the dignified calmness with which such gratuitous insults as these have for many years been borne, bespeaks the possession of a large share of self-command on the part of our neighbours.

From the remarks which fell from other peers, it might have been supposed that England was at the time completely disarmed. Forgetting our 464 steamers, our 62,400 seamen, the Militia Act of 1852, and the "very little short of 200,000 fighting men whom, in the event of war, we could put into the field,"* Lord Ellenborough exclaimed—"My Lords, it is not safe for this country to remain unarmed in

* Lord Palmerston, Aug. 5, 1859, *Hansard*, clv. 1079.

the midst of armed nations. When, of two neighbouring nations who have ever been rivals, and have often been engaged in desperate hostilities against each other, one determines to apply all her energies to making money, and the other to making preparations for war, it is obvious enough with which of the two nations all the money must ultimately remain."*

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe also—after expressing his gratitude to Lord Lyndhurst "for calling attention to this most important and solemn question at so anxious a time as the present," and reminding his hearers that "although the supplies necessary for taking the precautionary measures now suggested could not originate in that House, nevertheless, those measures had first been brought under consideration there,"—proceeded to remark on the unwillingness of free countries to prepare for defence in anticipation of war; and declared "that it was a just cause of shame and an intolerable humiliation, that a great empire like ours should appear, though it were only for one hour, to exist by sufferance, and at the good pleasure of a forbearing neighbour."†

The administration of Lord Derby having in the previous month been displaced by that of Lord Palmerston, the Government was on this occasion represented by Lord Granville, who, in allusion to the tone of Lord Lyndhurst's speech, said:—"If a feeling of hostility does exist, as he says it does, not on the part of the Emperor Napoleon, but on the part of

* *Hansard*, cliv. 645. † *Hansard*, ib. 627—8.

the French people, I doubt that his speech will tend to allay it. When he points out in the most marked way the defenceless character of our shores—when at the same time he boasts of our former victories, and when he makes something like insinuating and sneering allusions both to the government and people of France—I am afraid that, coming from such lips as his, such language is not well calculated to promote the object of unbroken friendly alliance." The Duke of Somerset, who had succeeded Sir John Pakington as First Lord of the Admiralty, was still more plain-spoken on this point: "He greatly regretted the exciting language which their lordships had just heard. If such language were persevered in, it would be necessary to have not only a peace, but a war establishment. There was no peace whatever in the language of the noble and learned lord (Lord Lyndhurst). That language was calculated to excite the passions of England and France; and he thought it most unwise to talk as the noble and learned lord had done of two great nations."

It was not the speeches of individuals, however high their rank or eminent their ability, but the constant augmentation of our armaments, by successive Governments, which mainly tended to excite feelings of alarm and resentment towards France; and in this policy the administration which had now returned to power will be found to surpass all preceding Governments.

Parliament had reassembled, after the dissolution by Lord Derby's Government, on the 31st May, 1859; and in the following month Lord Palmer-

ston's Ministry resumed office. Just previous to the dissolution, Lord Clarence Paget had brought forward a motion on the Dockyard Expenditure, when he adduced a very elaborate series of figures and estimates to prove that, during the past eleven years, there had been an unnecessary expenditure, "a deficit or a discrepancy," of £5,000,000 of money in the Government yards,—equal to twenty-two line-of-battle ships, with all complete, ready for sea. He spoke of an extravagance in the ship-building department which "really appalled him;" said he could point out the reason why we had so little to show for such an enormous expenditure; and that, if his motion were accepted, "such statements as that of Sir John Pakington—which had produced such a painful sensation out of doors, namely that, after laying out £20,000,000 on a steam navy simply for the construction of the ships, and exclusive of the cost of their engines and machinery, we were, both in numbers and quality, inferior to the French in line-of-battle ships,—would be impossible." The following graphic description of the manner in which our dockyard artificers amuse themselves might help to account for some superiority in the French navy, without implying any great merit on the part of our neighbour:—

"He did not think the House had the smallest notion of what had been going on in our dockyards in the way of tinkering vessels, amputating them, and performing all sorts of surgical operations upon them. They had their heads cut off, they had their tails cut off, they were sawn asunder, they were mal-

treated in every possible way. Ships built ten years ago by Sir William Symonds were not in fashion at the present day, and nobody could blame the Admiralty for lengthening and altering them, because, as originally constructed, they were not now fit to go to sea; but he wished to speak of the reckless alterations of new ships. Their name was legion: almost every ship was altered: there was scarcely one that had not undergone some frightful operation at some time or other."

He characterised Sir John Pakington's speech, on moving the Navy Estimates, as being "the truth and nothing but the truth, but not the whole truth;" and he proceeded to say "that it was a very able statement to make out his case, first to attack the right hon. gentleman who preceded him in office, and secondly, to induce the House to grant a large sum of money to increase our line-of-battle ships; but he must also say that it tended to create an alarm, which he for one did not share. The First Lord, for example, did not tell the House of an admirable class of vessels, in which we possessed an immense superiority over the French—a superiority measured according to the right hon. Member for Halifax (Sir Charles Wood) by 200 excellent small ships. He was not going to enter into a discussion upon the comparative merits of line-of-battle ships and gun-boats. But if he had a large sum of money to lay out, he would prefer, not gun-boats exclusively, but certainly small vessels."*

* *Hansard*, cliii. 39—48.

In the course of the discussion, Mr. Lindsay said "he believed that £7,000,000, properly applied, would go as far as £10,000,000 now went in building our ships of war, and in our naval expenditure generally."* And on a previous occasion it had been stated by Mr. Bentinck that "he had asked many of the most eminent owners of private yards in the country the question—'Supposing you were to carry on your yards upon the system on which Her Majesty's dockyards are conducted, what would be the result?' And the invariable answer had been, if we were to approach that system, with the Bank of England at our back, we should be ruined in six months."†

On the 8th July, Lord Clarence Paget, having in the mean time accepted the post of Secretary of the Admiralty, introduced the Navy Estimates to the House in a long speech. The independent irresponsible critic had been suddenly metamorphosed into the Government Official. The sound precepts recently uttered by the naval reformer were brought so abruptly to the test of practice that the transformation had almost a touch of romance in it. It was as though Haroun Alraschid had seized a malcontent in his audience-chamber, thrown the pelisse of Grand Vizier over his shoulders, and said:—"Thou sayest well,—do as thou sayest." As the Secretary had only been a few days in the department, and as the Estimates were, with some additions, those of his predecessor, which had been virtually passed, his

* *Hansard*, cliii. 72. † *Hansard*, cliii. 62.

speech may be fairly exempted from criticism. It has all the candour and hopefulness which generally characterize the first utterances of Officials before they have occasion to apply to the House for money. He put in the foreground the coast-guard fleet which had been entirely ignored by his predecessor, declaring that "he could not speak too highly of those block-ships." He expatiated also upon our resources in merchant-steamers and private dockyards:—

"Why, Sir, we have got, I take it from a return that was moved for a few days ago, by my hon. friend the Member for Penryn (Mr. T. G. Baring), 159 steam vessels over 1000 tons each, and 72 between 1,000 and 700 tons each, together 231 merchant steam vessels, most of which might be quickly adapted to carry Armstrong guns, and thus prove a most valuable addition to the defences of the country. There is yet another source from which we can very largely increase our navy at any moment with regard to ships, and that is our commercial yards. Here is another return, which I think will be interesting to the Committee, according to which there are, in addition to the shipwrights employed in the royal dockyards, about 10,000 shipwrights in Great Britain. Now, it is an old shipwright's maxim that 1,000 shipwrights can build eight men-of-war of 1,000 tons each in twelve months; consequently, 10,000, which is the number that we have in the commercial yards of this country, could build 80 corvettes of 1,000 tons each in twelve months,

or at the rate of between six and seven per month."*

He stated that the number of men then actually employed in the Government dockyards was 17,690, as against 14,128 in the beginning of March; and he added:—

"During the past year, we have built in tonnage of line-of-battle ships, 10,604 tons; in frigates, 5,851 tons; in corvettes, 1,193 tons; and in sloops and gun vessels, 1,511 tons; making the total tonnage built, up to the end of the last financial year, 19,159.

* * * *

During the present year, supposing that our scheme is carried out, and that no unforeseen contingency should arise, we shall build of line-of-battle ships, 19,606 tons; of frigates, 15,897 tons; of corvettes, 5,130 tons; and of sloops and gun-vessels, 5,651 tons; making a total of 46,284 tons which will be built this year, against 19,159 tons last year."†

It may be concluded, from his reiterated declaration in favour of small vessels, that he administered with much repugnance to this enormous outlay on line-of-battle ships; but he must not be held responsible for the engagements of his predecessor.

Hitherto, the invasion agitation had been confined almost exclusively to the Peers. With the exception of the indefatigable Sir Charles Napier, very little had been said on the subject in the House of Commons since the startling speech on the introduction of the navy estimates. Indeed, the gallant

* *Hansard*, cliv. 905. † *Hansard*, ib. 914.

Admiral could not help lamenting the want of that enthusiasm which had characterised the debates in the Upper House: "He had derived great satisfaction from the speeches delivered in another place by Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Hardwicke, and Lord Ellenborough, with every word of which he perfectly agreed, and he only wished they could hear such speeches in the House of Commons."* His wish was speedily to be gratified. But, before coming to the occasion, it may be well to note a straw in the wind. On the 15th July, Lord William Graham, addressing himself to the Foreign Minister, said, "he wished to ask the question of which he had given notice, whether the Government had received any information respecting the formation of a large Channel Fleet at Brest, with gun-boats and means for embarking and disembarking troops, and, if so, whether they had demanded any explanations from the French Government on the subject."† To which Lord John Russell replied, that our Consul at Brest had informed him that "there were no extraordinary preparations going on either at Cherbourg or Brest."

That which, without offence, may be called the great panic speech of the session—for no other epithet will so properly describe it—has now to be noticed. On the 29th July, 1859, Mr. Horsman brought forward his motion for raising money by loan "for completing the necessary works of national defence projected, or already in progress." The most

* *Hansard*, cliv. 993. † *Hansard*, ib. 1293.

desponding and terror-stricken invasion theory was put forth on this occasion. The motion assumed that all other modes of defence, whether by fleets, armies, militia, or volunteers, were insufficient; and proposed to borrow a sum of money, which ultimately took the formidable proportions of from ten to twelve millions, to be expended on fortifications. The speech delivered on the occasion, unexceptionable as a rhetorical performance, was absolutely destitute of one fact or figure to prove the danger against which we were called upon to arm. There were vague assertions of "enormous preparations" and "increasing armaments," on the part of France, and she was said, in her naval preparations, to have "got ahead of us, and to be making every effort to preserve that start," whilst on our part there was, with the same sweeping vagueness, said to be a "want of all plan or preparation for defence on this side of the Channel;" but, from the first word to the last, the speech did not contain one syllable respecting the comparative strength of the English and French navies. France might at the time have had 100,000 seamen, and 100 ships of the line in the Channel, judging from the tone of the speaker, and for any information which he imparted to the contrary. Let it not, however, be thought, after this description, that too much space is devoted to the following extracts; for, although the motion did not succeed at the moment, it required only a twelvemonth, as we shall see, to make the speaker the triumphant master of the situation. The country has, in accordance with his views, been committed to a plan of expendi-

ture more likely to reach twenty millions than ten, unless arrested by the good sense of the people, or by a recurring reverse in the revenue; and the future advocates of the scheme may be defied to show any better grounds for the outlay than will be found in the splendid declamation before us:—

"The Emperor of the French," said he, "acted for the interests of France; it was ours to guard the safety of England, and if he were asked, 'Why do you suspect the French Emperor of designs of war?' and still more, 'Why do you insult him by suspicions of invasion?' he should be driven to answer by a reference to facts as notorious in France as in England—that he apprehended war, because he saw the Emperor of the French preparing for it; and he anticipated invasion, because an attempted invasion must be a necessary accompaniment of the war; and as they saw unmistakeable proofs of preparation for war, so also those who were not wilfully blind must see the most unmistakeable proofs of preparation for invasion; and as to our insulting him by the suspicion, he replied, that no man could be insulted by our believing what he himself openly, publicly, and ostentatiously told us he would probably do.

* * * *

"They (the Emperor's writings) afforded the key of what would otherwise be a mystery, and enable people to interpret what would otherwise be unintelligible, namely, that those vast preparations, the extension of the navy, the fortification of the coast,

the enlargement and increase in the number of transports, and the conscription for the marine, all indicated preparation for a gigantic enterprise, to be undertaken some day or another against a gigantic naval Power, and that Power need not be named."*

He did not, however, confine himself to a description of these mighty preparations, but, warming as he proceeded, and giving a free rein to his imagination, he thus pictured a descent on our shores: "That army would leave its own ports an exultant, and, by anticipation, a victorious army. From the moment it landed on the shores of England it would have to fight its way with the desperation of a forlorn hope, and, within two or three weeks of the landing of the first Zouave, either it would be completely annihilated, or London would be taken."† Having passed a glowing eulogy on Lord Lyndhurst, declaring, "that he esteemed it a good fortune and a privilege to have heard the speech of that venerable peer, whose courageous exposition of a national danger had caused so much sensation,"‡ he called for measures of immediate protection, in language more suited to a Committee of Public Safety than, under the circumstances, to the House of Commons:—

"Not a moment must be lost in making the country safe against every accident; and until it was so, we must act as if the crisis were upon us. No human tongue could tell how soon or how suddenly

* *Hansard*, clv. 688-9. † *Hansard*, clv. 685.
‡ *Hansard*, clv. 678.

it might arrive, and that it might still be distant was our good fortune, of which we should make the most. Every public or private yard should be put into full work; every artificer and extra hand should work extra hours, as if the war were to begin next week. As gun-boats could be built more rapidly than men-of-war, gun-boats should be multiplied as fast as possible; as volunteers could be enrolled faster than the line, they should at once be raised; as rifles could not be made fast enough in England, we should renew that order in Belgium, even though they should cost sixpence a piece more than the Horse Guards' regulation; and, night and day, the process of manufacturing, constructing, arming, drilling, should go on till the country was made safe, and then we might desist from preparations, and return to our peace expenditure, with the certainty that these humiliating, lowering, and degrading panic-cries of invasion would never disturb our country or our Government again."*

The following is the only approach to a fact in the whole speech respecting the French naval armaments. "While we were only experimenting, France had already built iron-cased vessels, armed with rifled artillery—[Sir Charles Napier: hear, hear!] —and could, at short notice, bring into the Channel a fleet more powerful than ours, and could man it more easily with practised seamen."† This was spoken on the 29th of July, 1859. On the 6th of February following, the writer of these pages visited

* *Hansard*, clv. 686-7. † *Hansard*, clv. 684.

Toulon, and found workmen employed in hanging the armour on the sides of the still unfinished *La Gloire*, the first *sea-going* iron-clad ship ever built, (for England had, at the time, more iron-cased floating *batteries* than France),* and she did not make her first trial trip in the Mediterranean till August, 1860, or more than a year after these terrified utterances.

The only way of opposing reason to declamation is by exposing its want of argument, and supplying its deficiency of facts. The eloquent alarmist called for the multiplication of gun-boats, forgetting that we had at that time 162, whilst France had only 28; he required that "every artificer and extra hand should work extra hours," and he had been told three weeks previously that a system of "task and job-work and over hours of working had been established in the dockyards† to build 46,284 tons, this year, against 19,159 tons last year;" and he totally lost sight of the enormous and almost unprecedented superiority of our navy in commission at the time, as compared with that of France.

As the agitation now about to break forth out of doors respecting the National Defences, and for the

* "The hon. member for Inverness-shire had stated that the building of iron-plated batteries had been neglected in this country. But the fact was that in the year 1855 the French sent two of those floating-batteries to the Crimea, and we also sent two; while, in the following year, we had not less than eight of them, to the two possessed by the French." — Sir Charles Wood, *Hansard*, clxi. 1158.

† *Ibid.* cliv. 912.

promotion of Rifle Corps, was the result of the cry of alarm which was raised in the two Houses respecting the naval preparations in France, it may be well here to give the official accounts of the two countries for 1859, the last year for which, at the time of penning these pages, the French accounts are definitively audited. The following figures, taken from the tables in the first page, will show the number of men, the amount expended in dockyard labour, and the total expenditure for the navies of the two countries:—

1859.

	Number of Men.	Wages in Dockyards.	Total Expenditure.
England	72,400	£1,582,112	£11,072,243
France	38,470	772,931	8,333,933

It must be borne in mind that this was the year of the war in Italy, when the French navy was called into requisition to aid the operations of the army, and especially to assist in the transport of troops to Genoa. Yet it will be seen that our total expenditure exceeded that of France by the amount of £2,738,310. The disproportion is, however, still greater if we compare the items: in men, our force was nearly double, whilst our dockyard expenditure, which has been called the "aggressive outlay," was actually more than double. If we compare the two years 1858 and 1859, we shall find that whilst France added 8,868 to the number of her men, we added 16,517, or nearly double the French increase. It will be found, also, by a com-

parison of the expenditure in the dockyards for the same years, that whilst our increase was £590,520, that of France was only £131,977. This shows that the increased cost of the French navy was for the current expenses, in materials, coal, provisions, pay, etc., consequent upon employing 300 vessels in 1859, as against 199 in 1858, and not for building new ships to create a permanent increase of force. And this view has been verified by an examination of all the details of the French naval expenditure for 1859. If the reader will carry his eye carefully back over the whole of the tables in the first page, he will find that at no time, for twenty-five years, had the naval preparations of England, as measured by the number of men, or the expenditure for building ships, been so disproportionately great, as compared with those of France, as in 1859. The alarm on this occasion, as in the case of the previous panic of 1851, was excited at the very time when it happened to have the least foundation; which might appear strange, did we not know that panic is not the product of reason but passion, and that it is quite as likely to occur under one state of circumstances as another.

Although little allusion will be made to the increase in our land forces—because it has not, as in the case of the navy, been generally justified by an appeal to the corresponding preparations in France—yet it must not be forgotten that the army, militia, and ordnance, had undergone augmentations simultaneously with those of our fleets. In a subsequent debate on the National Defences (5th August), Lord Palmerston said:—

"I hold that, in the event of war, we could put into the field something little short of 200,000 fighting men. We have the regular force of, I hope, not less than 60,000 men. Then we have the Militia, the establishment of which is 120,000 men; and if that Militia be well recruited and supplied, as, in the event of emergency, I am sure would be the case, I reckon upon 100,000 there. Then we have 14,000 yeomanry, 12,000 or 14,000 pensioners, and those men who have served their ten years, with whom my right hon. friend the Secretary for War proposes to deal to-night. We have, also, always at home a certain force of marines; and we could, if we chose, re-organize our dockyard battalions for the defence of those establishments. Putting all these forces together, I say that an enemy contemplating an attack upon us must reckon upon not less than 200,000 men to resist him."

Such was the state of our preparations, by land and sea, when Parliament was prorogued, after having laid the train for an agitation which spread throughout the country during the recess. The Rifle Corps movement, which now arose, is of such recent origin, and the subsequent proceedings to promote its success are so fresh in the memory of all, that it is unnecessary to dwell on the subject. Not only were special meetings called to forward the object, but at every public gathering, whatever its origin or purpose, the topic was sure to be obtruded. Especially was it so at the Agricultural Societies' meetings, whose orators, instead of descanting on the rival breeds of cattle, or the various kinds of tillage, dis-

cussed the prospects of an invasion and the best mode of dealing with the invaders:—"How much will you charge the French for your corn when they land?" cried one of his audience to a sturdy Somersetshire yeoman who was on his legs addressing them; and his reply—"They shall pay for it with their blood" —elicited rounds of applause. The assumption everywhere was—founded on the declarations made in Parliament—that France was surpassing us as a naval power: that she was our equal in the largest ships, and was now providing herself with an iron-cased fleet, in which description of vessels we were quite unprepared, and that we must, therefore, be ready to fight for freedom on our own soil. The ambitious designs of the third Napoleon were discussed in language scarcely less denunciatory than that which had been applied to his uncle fifty years before. To doubt his hostile intentions was a proof either of want of patriotism or of sagacity. Had not venerable peers proclaimed their alarm—and would they have broken through their habitual reserve without sufficient cause? And did not successive Governments make enormous additions to our Navy Estimates? They were in a position to command exclusive information; and was it likely, unless they had positive proofs of impending danger, that they would have imposed such unnecessary expense on the country? This last appeal was quite irresistible: for the good British public defer, with a faith amounting to a superstition, to the authority of official men. All this tended to throw the odium of our increased taxation on the Emperor—who was supposed to personify our

national danger—and the ominous words were sometimes heard: "We had better fight it out." Such was the state of fear, irritation, and resentment, into which the public mind was thrown towards the close of 1859; and probably at no previous time, within the experience of the present generation, would the country have been, had any accident afforded the occasion, so resigned to a war with France.

It was under these circumstances that the writer of these pages visited Paris,* on an errand which detained him in France for more than a year. For several months afterwards, the reports of speeches at Rifle Corps meetings continued to reach the French capital, having for their invariable burden complaints of the hostile attitude of the ruler of France, whose character and designs, it must be confessed, were portrayed in not the most flattering colours. The effect produced by the invasion panic in England was very dissimilar upon different classes in France. Statesmen, and men of education and experience, did not give the British Government credit for sincerity when it made the alleged naval armaments of France the plea for extraordinary warlike preparations. Their opinion could not be better expressed than in the words of M. Ducos—already

* The following incident will illustrate the state of public feeling. On his way to Paris, the writer passed a day or two at Brighton, where he met a friend—certainly one of the last men to be charged with a deficiency of courage—who, on learning the writer's destination, avowed that he had been deterred from taking his family for the autumn to the French metropolis by the fear of a rupture with France, and the risk of being detained prisoner by the Emperor, after the precedent of 1803.

quoted—who, when writing privately to one of his colleagues during the former panic, observed that "the English cabinet may possibly not be very much distressed by these imaginary terrors (as we have sometimes seen among ourselves), inasmuch as they enable them to swell their budget, and serve to strengthen a somewhat uncertain majority in Parliament."* And some pungent remarks in this sense were frequently heard in the circles of Parisian society.† But among the less intelligent masses of the people the effect was different. Their ears had caught the echo of the voice of Sir Charles Napier, who had been for years incessantly proclaiming our naval inferiority, until there was at last a wide-spread popular belief that France had become the mistress of the Channel. With the exception of an occasional article in a semi-official journal, giving a comparison of the naval expenditure of the two Governments, with perhaps a self-complacent commentary on the superior economy of the French administration, nothing was done to disabuse the public mind on the subject. And this popular delusion might have been an element of danger to the peace of the two countries, had it not been for the character of the Emperor, who, throughout these provocations, displayed a perfect equanimity and self-control,—the rarest quality to be found in those who have climbed the dizzy heights of power.

* *Ante*, p. 262.

† "Ah, pauvre John Bull!" exclaimed a lady in the presence of the writer, "quand on veut lui enlever son argent on lui fait peur de nous."

During his residence in France, the writer profited by the best possible opportunity for making himself acquainted with the naval preparations of that country. The arsenals were open to him or his friends, and there was no official information which he sought and failed to obtain. The result of this investigation was merely to confirm the conviction which had been previously derived from our own official documents. Had it been otherwise, these pages would not have been penned; and yet the writer asks no credit for any statement they contain, on the ground of his private or exclusive sources of information. The facts contained in the following, as in the preceding pages, must owe all their value to the public and official sources, equally accessible to everybody, from whence they are derived. In the citations from *Hansard*, it has been thought fair to allow the statesmen who officiate in that great laboratory of our history, the British parliament, to be heard as much as possible in their own language.

On the 13th February, 1860, the Navy Estimates were proposed to the House; but before the Secretary of the Admiralty was permitted to commence his task, the ever-watchful and indefatigable Mr. Williams entered his protest against "the enormous increase in the Estimates for the present year;" asserting that, "the grand total, which exceeded £12,800,000, was larger in amount by more than £1,000,000 than any that had ever been presented to that House in a time of peace;" and he proceeded to remark that "the number of men required for the navy this year of peace was 85,500, being 6,000

more than they required when they were actually at war with Russia." Mr Lindsay and Mr. Bentinck rose successively to acquit the Secretary of the Admiralty of all responsibility for not being able "to carry out in office the economical views he had expressed in opposition." It will be necessary not only to accept this generous theory, but still farther to enlarge the bill of indemnity, and assume that the statement now made was not the speech of Lord Clarence Paget, but that it was prepared for him by those who were responsible for the Estimates.

To reconcile the country to this enormous expenditure, it was necessary that the French navy should be made to assume very alarming proportions. But how was this to be accomplished by any ordinary mode of comparison? If the expenditure in the dockyards had been compared, ours would have been shown to be double that of France; if it had been a comparison of seamen, the number voted, together with the reserve, would have been found nearly three times as great in England as in France; had the ships in commission, or the ships afloat in the two navies, been compared, the effect would have been the reverse of what was desired. A very ingenious and perfectly original mode of comparison was adopted. The number of ships in *commission* in England was compared with the number *afloat* in France: they chanced to be 244 in each case,* and this equality was, perhaps, the temptation to adopt the new method. Had the numbers afloat in both cases been given, they

* *Hansard*, clvi. 966-9.

would have been, as afterwards incidentally appears in the statement, 244 French and 456 English.* In justification of this mode of comparison, by which all the British vessels not having crews were left out of the account, it was alleged that, "while all the French ships that were afloat could be manned at a very short notice, it was only those which we had in commission which were in a similar position.'† It is to be regretted that there was no Lord Clarence Paget in opposition to ask—"of what use could it be to build ships and launch them, if they were afterwards to count for nothing?" But it is curious to observe, in another part of the same statement, how this difficulty is surmounted, for, in speaking of the facility with which seamen had been obtained, it is said—

"And perhaps I had better add a more practical assurance, that, if we wished, we could not enter them (seamen) in the navy, because the number is complete, and, except for casualties, we have no means of entering any considerable number of men over and above what we have at present. I think that is a very satisfactory state of things, and that the House will be glad to hear that there is no difficulty in getting men. This vast force of ships, only the creation of the last few months, is wholly manned."‡

Now, it is high time that we shook off this bugbear of the difficulty of manning the navy, and learnt to rely on the infallible law of demand and supply.

* *Hansard*, clvi. 966-9. † *Hansard*, ib. 967.
‡ *Hansard*, ib. 974.

Formerly, we trusted to the press-gang to steal the men; in future we shall find it a cheaper and safer method to pay the market price for them.* This is illustrated by the case before us. At the moment when this statement was made, there was a bounty payable of £4 for able and £2 for ordinary seamen. It had been fixed at £10 the year before by Sir John Pakington, but it was soon found not to be necessary to pay so high a bounty to bring our navy up to 80,000 men. Now, we will suppose that a war was impending, and that the country required the services of 150,000 instead of 80,000 seamen,—is there any doubt that England could afford to pay the necessary price for them? There is no kind of skilled labour so available, because there is none so migratory and so free from local ties as that of the sailor. Let us assume a sudden and urgent necessity to arise, and that our Government offered to pay £40 a-year to able-bodied seamen—which would be £10 or £15 more than the present pay—taking care that the wages be paid monthly, in order to avoid the temptation to desert which would be offered by paying a bounty in advance,—unquestionably such an offer

* "If they wanted men in the navy they must resort to the same means as a mercantile man or a millowner—namely, offer a good market price for labour. If they wanted sailors they must offer to pay sufficiently high to induce them to come forward and enter the service. To expect men to enter for low wages would only lead to disappointment; it would be found to be impossible to get them without high wages. That was the only fair and just way of obtaining them,—but hitherto the House of Commons had refused to adopt it."—Sir Charles Napier. *Hansard*, clvii. 1810.

would give the Admiralty the pick not only of our own merchant service, but of the seamen sailing out of American, German, and Scandinavian ports. Now, £40 each for 150,000 seamen amounts to just £6,000,000 a-year. It is about sixpence in the pound of the income-tax, or half the amount paid in excise and customs duties by the consumers of ardent spirits. A nation so rich as this would cheerfully pay such an amount for its defence in case of danger. It would be but the most fractional percentage of insurance on the thousands of millions worth of property in these islands, and would be only about five per cent. on the estimated average value of the ships and cargoes afloat belonging to British owners. But if it be admitted that at least on these, if not on cheaper terms, the seamen will be forthcoming in case of an impending war, what becomes of the argument that we can only calculate on manning those ships which are already in commission?

If we pursue the statement of the Secretary of the Admiralty a little more into details, we find, on comparing the whole of the screw line-of-battle ships, built and building, in the two navies, that whilst France is stated to possess thirty-seven, England is put down at fifty-nine, with the nine blockships making sixty-eight. The English frigates are set down at forty-five, and the French at forty-seven, including the fifteen old transatlantic paddle steamers. In the smaller descriptions of vessels, our number was double that of the French.

The striking fact is given in this statement that we had still twelve sailing line-of-battle ships fit for

conversion into screw steamers. Now, considering that the Admiralty had, ever since 1850, professed to lay down no vessels of this class which were not expressly designed for steam machinery, thus recognising the fact that sailing vessels were for the future obsolete, what shall be said of the policy of continuing to build new ships, and leaving twelve sailing vessels still fit to be converted in 1860, to say nothing of those which had in the interval been decaying in ordinary, and rendered unfit for conversion? And what must be thought of those who, when this mismanagement became apparent, directed the cry of alarm and resentment against France, because, by pursuing a more provident course, she had, in a shorter time, and at less expense, attained more satisfactory results than ourselves? The following is the account of the tonnage built in the past year, and estimate for the year following:—

"It may possibly be remembered that, in proposing the estimates last year, we announced our intention, of course subject to contingencies, of building 46,000 tons of shipping in the dockyards. [Sir J. Pakington: 'Exclusive of conversions?'] We said we would convert four line-of-battle ships and five frigates in addition. What we have actually built amounts to 19,730 tons in ships of the line, 13,654 in frigates, 5,436 in corvettes, and 5,224 in sloops and gun-vessels. We have not fulfilled our promise as to frigates, in which class I stated that we would build 16,000 tons, the reason being that there was an insufficiency of timber for the purpose; but we have made up for the deficiency in another way,

for we have gone beyond our undertaking in the conversion of sailing into steam frigates and screw ships. What we propose doing in the present, or, as my right hon. friend reminds me, the ensuing financial year, is to build 13,216 tons of ships of the line, 13,500 tons of frigates, 4,871 tons of corvettes, 8,045 tons of sloops and gun-vessels, and 302 tons of gunboats, making a total of 39,934 tons. In addition, we propose to convert four more line-of-battle ships and four frigates."*

The estimated constructions for the ensuing year are thus explained in ships instead of tonnage:—

"Supposing the Committee is pleased to consent to these estimates, we hope to add to the navy, before the end of the next financial year, eight line-of-battle ships, twelve frigates, four iron-cased ships, four corvettes, fifteen sloops, and twenty-three gun-vessels and gunboats. That includes the conversion of four line-of-battle ships and four frigates."†

It is impossible to deal with this proposal of the Secretary of the Admiralty, to add eight line-of-battle ships and twelve frigates to our steam navy, without referring to the part he had previously taken in opposition to the further construction of large ships, for he was the first and ablest opponent of the policy which he now followed when in office. So long ago as May, 1857, he expressed his opinion that line-of-battle ships were "not the instruments by which in future the fate of empires would be decided."‡ He then advised the First Lord to "rest on his oars,"§

* *Hansard*, clvi. 978. † *Hansard*, clvi. 969.

‡ *Ante*, p. 279. § *Ibid.* p. 280.

and stated that "an *Enquête* or Commission was sitting in France to inquire whether line-of-battle ships were or were not the most efficient class of ships which could now be employed."* Every circumstance which had since occurred tended to confirm the views then expressed by Lord Clarence Paget. As each new experiment with artillery displayed the destructive effects of detonating shells, or of molten iron, even the oldest admirals raised their hands and exclaimed, "There is an end of wooden ships of the line!" The *Enquête* or Commission appointed in France was known to have decided against line-of-battle ships, for in the report upon the comparative state of the English and French navies presented to the House in 1859, it is stated that naval men in France "were of opinion that no more ships of the line will be laid down, and that in ten years that class of vessels will have become obsolete."† This had reference to the successful experiments in iron-cased ships.

But, independent of this innovation, the opinion of the highest nautical authorities had been pronounced against the policy of exposing such a huge target as a line-of-battle ship, with perhaps a thousand men and thirty or forty tons of gunpowder on board, to the fire of modern shell guns. The Americans had abandoned these large ships before the iron-clad vessels were thought of, and it is stated that when their greatest authority, Captain Dahlgren, visited our ports more than three years ago, although he

* *Ante*, p. 280. † *Parliamentary Paper*, 182, 1859, p. 15.

was much struck with the gun-boats, to which he devoted particular attention, he looked upon line-of-battle ships as all but obsolete, and considered that, so far as America was concerned, her naval policy "would render the construction of such vessels almost useless."* The condemnation of wooden ships of the line by intelligent naval men had found utterance in very emphatic phrases:—"They will be blown to lucifer matches," said one; "they will be mere human slaughter-houses," said another; whilst a third declared that, in case of two such vessels coming into collision, at close quarters, the only word of command for which there would be time would be, "Fire, and lower your boats."

The comparative numbers of these vessels possessed by England and France deprived the Admiralty of every pretext for this increase. The Secretary, in his statement, informs us that we had at the time sixty-eight ships of the line, including block-ships, whilst France had only thirty-seven; and as Sir Charles Wood had stated the French force in 1857 at forty,† and as they were put down also at forty in the report of 1859,‡ it was clear in 1860 that our neighbour had abandoned the further building of these vessels. All these facts were well known to our Government, when they were pushing forward the construction of large wooden vessels at a rate of expenditure unparalleled even at the height of the great French war. It will presently be seen that so manifest did the impolicy of this course at length

* *The Navies of the World*, by HANS BUSK, p. 116.

† *Ante*, p. 277. ‡ *Ante*, p. 307.

become, to everybody except the Admiralty, that the common sense of the House of Commons rose in revolt the following session, and extorted from the minister a pledge to discontinue the further building of ships-of-the-line, and to abandon, unfinished, those on the stocks. The gigantic sacrifice involved in this outlay of public money will, in a very few years, be brought home to the appreciation of the British public, in the possession of hundreds of wooden vessels of different sizes which will be acknowledged to be valueless and even dangerous to their possessors; and then only will be fully estimated the system of management which alone could have created such a costly monument to its own recklessness and want of forethought.

It is impossible to doubt that the Secretary of the Admiralty remained unchanged in the views he had expressed when in opposition: indeed, any intelligent and unprejudiced mind must have become confirmed by experience in those sound opinions. Whilst extending to him the full benefit of that dispensation from individual responsibility which is claimed for those who become members of a government, it is to be desired, in the interest of the country—which has also its claim on the talents and judgment of public men—that some casuist, skilled in political ethics, would define the limit of inconsistency beyond which politicians shall not be allowed to wander.

The navy estimates, the unparalleled amount of which was accurately described in the brief protest of Mr. Williams, were agreed to without further opposition; and it is in connection with this fact that

the reader is asked to regard the demonstration which now calls for notice.

On the 1st May, 1860, Lord Lyndhurst rose in the House of Peers, pursuant to previous notice, to call for explanations from the Government respecting the progress of the naval reserve, when he delivered a speech identical in spirit and object with that of the previous year.

Of the many voices that have been raised to agitate the public mind on the subject of our armaments, none has found a louder echo on the Continent than that of this learned peer. It is only the natural result of his high position and great ability. To him in the Lords, and Mr. Horsman and Sir Charles Napier in the Commons, and to the connivance of successive Governments, are mainly attributed, in France, the success of the invasion panic. "The motions of Lord Lyndhurst and of Mr. Horsman," says M. Cucheval Clarigny, "the speeches and letters of Sir Charles Napier; the exaggerations, sincere or pretended, of the orators of the Government and of the opposition, about the forces of France—all had contributed to create a kind of panic in England."*

Lord Lyndhurst had, on a previous occasion, resented the remarks of an adverse critic in the House of Commons, who had alluded to his great age. It must be allowed that his speeches invite no such allusion, unless to elicit, even from an opponent, the tribute of admiration for their great intellectual

* *The Navy Budgets of England and France*, p. 69.

merits. The close and logical reasoning of his latest speeches, so free from the garrulity, or the tendency to narrative, which generally take the place of argument in the discourses of the aged, presents an instance of the late preservation of the mental powers for which it would be difficult to find a parallel. In conceding to him, however, all the authority which attaches to the possession of unimpaired faculties, he becomes divested of that privilege by which the venerable in years are shielded from an unequal conflict with other men; and he must consent to be held amenable to criticism for his public utterances, and for the proper exercise of the influence which his learning and rank confer on him.

England and France had been at peace for forty-five years; and, just previously, a treaty of commerce had been entered into, which was designed to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries. Passing over this event, with a sneer at "the further exchange of pottery and cotton for silks and wine," he seized this inopportune moment for going back half a century to disinter the buried strife of our fathers, and again to taunt our brave neighbours with their naval reverses. "The French navy," he said, "was, by the great victory of the Nile, the victory of Lord Duncan, that of Lord St. Vincent, and the great and splendid victory of Trafalgar, reduced at the termination of the war to such a state, that for twenty years after that period we remained, as far as our navy was concerned, in a state of perfect tranquillity." The aim of the speaker was to show that the restoration of the French navy

was the work of Louis Napoleon. He must be allowed to be heard in his own language:—

"Such, my Lords, was the result of the efforts made during the great French war. Very little change took place until after the memorable event which I now beg to call to your attention, I mean the accession to supreme power of the present Emperor of the French. In the year 1848 he was elected President of the Republic; and in the following year that celebrated Commission was appointed for the purpose of considering the re-organization of the navy of France. That Commission was composed of fifteen or more of the most able men selected from the navy and from the civil service of France, and they have framed a code of regulations of the most complete kind, for the purpose of stimulating and directing the efforts of the French navy. I have stated one remarkable date with respect to the issuing of that Commission. There is another date equally remarkable. No report was called for from that Commission until after the celebrated event of the 2nd of December. About twelve or fourteen days after that *coup d'état*, namely on the 15th of December, a report was called for by Louis Napoleon, and from that time the most strenuous exertions have been made to carry all the recommendations of that Committee into effect."*

Now, here are specific and tangible facts, which are not often found in speeches on this topic. In the first place, it is alleged that there was very little change in the relations of the English and French

* *Hansard*, clviii. 425.

navies until after the election of Louis Napoleon as President of the Republic. It has been shown in the preceding pages that the French navy bore a much larger proportion to that of England during the latter part of Louis Philippe's reign than it has done since Louis Napoleon has been at the head of affairs. If the reader will give himself the trouble to turn to the tables in the first page, and compare the period between 1840 and 1848 with that between 1849 and 1859, he will see how much more largely the disproportion has been to the disadvantage of France during the latter than the former period.

Next, there is an allusion to a Commission appointed in 1849, the year after the election of Louis Napoleon as President, to consider the re-organization of the French navy, and it might be inferred that this Commission was named by the President. It was, however, an *Enquête Parlémentaire*, emanating from the National Assembly, by a law of the 31st October, 1849, at a time when Louis Napoleon had acquired no ascendancy over that body.

Then, we have the portentous revelation that this Commission had framed "a code of regulations of the most complete kind:" that no Report was called for until after the 2nd December, 1851 (the date of the *Coup d'Etat*): that about twelve or fourteen days after, "namely on the 15th December, a report was called for by Louis Napoleon, and from that time the most strenuous exertions have been made to carry all the recommendations of that Committee into effect." Now, this is not only an ingenious argument, but an effective appeal to our imaginations. Here was an

ambitious man who had just thrown down the gauntlet to the National Assembly, which he had dissolved, and had appealed to the country to arbitrate between him and that body: and yet, while his fate was trembling in the balance, and it was still to be decided whether he should take a step towards the throne, or be again driven into exile, the one great dominant purpose of his life was never for a moment forgotten, the only absorbing thought of his mind was vengeance upon England! How deep and enduring must have been his hate, that, even whilst the vote by universal suffrage was going on, instead of thinking of the state of the poll, he should call for the Report on the state of the navy! The argument was worthy of the speaker in his best days in Westminster Hall; but, unluckily for the noble and learned lord, he departed from the usual vague declamation on this topic, and appealed to facts and dates. It is really almost incredible that a judicial peer, speaking in the highest assembly in the kingdom, conscious of the weight that would attach to his words, and accustomed to weigh and examine evidence, should have permitted himself to be the medium for making this extraordinary statement. These are the simple facts:—

The Commission, or *Enquête Parlémentaire*, was, as has been stated, appointed by the *Assemblée Nationale*, on the 31st October, 1849. It pursued its labours for upwards of two years, examining witnesses, visiting the dockyards, and calling for accounts and papers. The result of these investigations was printed in two thick quarto volumes, which we should

call "blue books," comprising the minutes of evidence, and an appendix of official documents. The preface to these volumes, dated 30th January, 1852, gives a brief and simple narrative of the singular fate of the commission, which was cut off, at the most critical moment of its existence, by the *coup d'état* of the 2nd December, 1851, when the National Assembly itself was dissolved.

It appears that M. Dufaure, the Reporter—or, as we should say in England, the Chairman—of the Commission, had read to his colleagues a part only of his Report, which was ordered to be printed, and to be distributed among the members previous to their deliberations; but, the preface proceeds to say, "This was rendered impossible after the 2nd December. Neither the Commission nor the Assembly from which it emanated could meet again. Its task, therefore, remained unaccomplished." It further states that "the whole of the resolutions of the Commission were only provisional, and on some important points they had not even deliberated:" and it adds, in conclusion, that, "If the Report should be published, with the documents which ought to accompany it, it will not have been submitted to the Commission; it will only be the production of the individual Reporter, who alone will be responsible for the opinions expressed in it."

Upwards of 200 "provisional" votes of the Commission are recorded in the minutes of proceedings. The first on the list, after the routine votes, and the most important as affecting ourselves, is a recommendation that the maximum of the number of line-

of-battle ships should thenceforth be forty-five; namely, thirty afloat and fifteen on the stocks, and that they should all be furnished with screws. It was a moderate limit compared with the old naval establishment of France. "From that time," says Lord Lyndhurst, "the most strenuous exertions have been made to carry all the recommendations of the Commission into effect." There were no recommendations of the Commission, for it never made a Report; but, so far was the Government from taking prompt measures to carry out the "provisional" resolution respecting screw line-of-battle ships, that in 1854, in the height of the Crimean war, the French had only ten screw liners;* and Sir Charles Napier stated that they had but one in the Baltic in that year.† Indeed, it is now universally agreed, that it was subsequently to that period that serious efforts were made to convert the French sailing ships into a steam navy: "the great increase in the naval force of France," says a writer already quoted, "may, therefore, be considered to date from the Crimean war."‡

But the gravest inaccuracy in Lord Lyndhurst's statement remains to be noticed, where he links the present state of the French navy with the labours of the Commission of 1849. "The result of that Commission," he said, "and of the admirable system which was formed under it, has turned out to be a formidable navy—a formidable navy of steam-vessels, to which alone I confine my obervations."§ He

* *Navies of the World*, p. 88.
† *Hansard*, clv. 702.
‡ *Navies of the World*, p. 89.
§ *Hansard*, clviii. 426.

was clearly not aware of what had taken place subsequently to the untimely dissolution of that body. In 1855, a Commission was appointed by the Emperor's Government, to consider the organization of the navy; and the result was a Report from the Minister of Marine, which was approved by a decree of the Emperor, in 1857, fixing the number of ships to be built, from year to year, until 1870; and this decree was published to the whole world. The line-of-battle ships were to reach a maximum of forty, instead of forty-five, as recommended by the resolution of the Commission of 1849. The Report contains the exact nomenclature of French shipping, with the strength of each ship in guns and horse-power. In fact, if it were not for the innovations which science is incessantly making, involving the reconstruction of her navy, all Europe might know, from this decree, for nearly ten years to come, what ships of all kinds France would possess.

If we turn to that part of Lord Lyndhurst's speech which referred to the state of our own navy, we shall find that, instead of dealing with the Estimates of the year in which he spoke, he preferred to revive those figures of Sir John Pakington which had done such good service in the previous year. Leaving totally out of view upwards of 300 of our steam ships of war afloat, ranging from corvettes to gun-boats, all capable of carrying the heaviest guns, and the hundreds of large merchant-steamers which would be available in case of war, and omitting all allusion to the great increase in our ships of the line and frigates during the preceding year, he thus

proceeded to lay before his audience the state of our navy :—

"At the beginning of last year, our fleet consisted of twenty-nine sail of the line, and the French fleet of precisely the same number; and, while we had twenty-six frigates, they had thirty-four." And he added, with singular candour, that "what addition has been made to our fleet, since the commencement of last year, I am not informed." It would have been only an act of ordinary prudence to have perused the speech of Lord Clarence Paget, delivered more than two months before; or, at least, to have possessed himself of a copy of the Navy Estimates for 1860. He would have then learnt that England had 456 steamers of all kinds afloat, against 244 in France; and it would have saved him from falling into the erroneous opinion which he expressed in proceeding to say "I do not imagine that at this moment our fleet exceeds, or if it does, only in a small degree, the steam naval force of France."

The object of the speech, however, was to show the danger we were in from want of seamen,—a point on which the noble speaker would also have been better informed if he had perused the speech of the Secretary of the Admiralty, who had taken a vote for 85,500 men and boys, and had declared that more seamen were offering than the Admiralty required. "In point of material," said Lord Lyndhurst, "that is to say in ships, you are far below the requirements of the country; while, so far as the manning of the ships is concerned, you are in a situation the most deplorable. I do not mince the

matter. Our position, in this respect, ought to be known throughout the country. No man ought to be ignorant of the real facts of the case."* Now, considering that he was, by his own confession at the moment, in ignorance of all that had occurred in the navy since the previous year, this confident tone of the speaker implied, at least, a strong belief in the favourable temper of his audience.

And it was undoubtedly to this favourable state of feeling in the Peers that the success of these speeches, both indoors and without, was mainly due; for they did not contain one fact that would bear the test of fair examination. The Upper House had, indeed, been the platform whence this invasion agitation spread throughout a large portion of the middle ranks of society. The Peers had made it fashionable to believe in the hostile designs of Louis Napoleon, and it became, to a certain extent, a test of respectability to be zealous in the promotion of rifle-corps, and other means of defending the country. To contend against the probability of invasion was to take the side of the enemy, to be called anti-English, or accused of being for peace at any price; nay, to require even proofs or arguments to show the reality of the danger, was to invite suspicion of want of patriotism. There was a kind of genteel terrorism exerted over everybody in "society," which, for a time, put down all opposition to the invasion party, —which was tacitly understood to be the aristocratic, anti-radical party. This *animus* (reminding

* *Hansard*, clviii. 435.

one of 1791) reveals itself in the speech before us in a manner which would have been to the last degree impolitic, if there had really been any danger from a foreign enemy, requiring "every class to unite in support of the honour and independence of the nation." In his concluding sentences, the noble speaker, who is too logical to have introduced such irrelevant matter had it not been to conciliate those he was addressing, protests against a reform of Parliament, and animadverts severely on those whom he characterises as being in favour of direct taxation, or desirous of introducing among us the social "equality, without liberty, that exists in France," or who are seeking to "pull down the wealthier and aristocratic classes."

The Duke of Somerset, the First Lord of the Admiralty, in his reply to Lord Lyndhurst, gave the following account of the labour which the Government was employing in the construction of those large wooden vessels which had been condemned as worse than useless by some of the highest naval authorities in Europe and America:*—

"And I can say that during the last eight months more men have been employed in our dockyards than at any previous period of the history of the country. I do not exclude the time of the great war,

* Lord Clarence Paget had, a fortnight previously, stated in the House of Commons that "the total number of persons employed in the dockyards, on the 1st March, was 20,032;" and he stated subsequently (8th June), that "the greatest number employed during the great war with France was only 14,754."—*Hansard*, clvii. 2014.

down to 1815; and in this statement I exclude the factories altogether, which form another great division of our naval establishments. I speak of the ship-building department only."

* * * *

"The noble and learned lord referred to the ships which we have now afloat. I find that we have built, and that there are now afloat, fifty ships of the line.

"*Lord Lyndhurst.*—Do you include block-ships?

"*The Duke of Somerset.*—I am not taking the block-ships into account."†

The little question and answer, at the close of the above extract, illustrates the manner in which the Coast-Guard block-ships are, by all Governments, left out of the numerical list of our ships of the line. It is true, they are sometimes alluded to, incidentally, as being fit for guarding harbours or mouths of rivers. But the question always recurs: seeing that these ships have the full complement of officers, the most complete armament, and picked seamen provided for them; seeing that they have a fleet of fifteen to twenty steam gun-boats attached to them, besides sailing-vessels, and that they are all placed under a flag-officer,—why, during the time when scores of good sailing line-of-battle ships were decaying in ordinary, were not some of them fitted with screws, and substituted for such of the block-ships as are alleged to be not fit for Channel service? Some

† *Hansard*, clviii. 438-9.

people will be uncharitable enough to suspect that the object is to have an excuse for another Channel fleet.

The following is the manner in which the First Lord replied to Lord Lyndhurst, upon the progress which had been made the previous year in manning the navy:—

"The noble and learned lord says we have the ships, but the ships are not half manned; but it so happens that it is just the contrary difficulty under which we have laboured. On coming into office, I found certain estimates prepared, and a £10 bounty in existence. I adopted these, and before the month of August I found that the number of men voted by Parliament was exceeded by 1000. The news of the Chinese disaster arrived in September, and I did not think it was prudent, under these circumstances, to put a stop to the enrolment of seamen; the result is that, for the last six months, we have been 5000 in excess of the vote. This year we determined to cover that larger number by a larger vote, but they were still coming in so rapidly that I was obliged to come to the determination only to take able seamen, or ordinary seamen who had already served on board the fleet and been drilled to the guns. When the noble and learned lord says that, if we look to the last month or so, it will be found that we were not getting men, of course that was so. The men we have are included in the estimates, and it was not likely I should be taking additional men when I

had already 5000 men more than had been provided for."*

This statement completely cut the ground from under the feet of Lord Lyndhurst;—but it did more,—it showed that the Government had no excuse for entertaining the question of a reserve at that moment at all. The formation of a reserve would be a legitimate measure in connection with a peace establishment; but our navy was not on a peace footing. Let the reader be good enough to turn to the accounts in the first page, and placing his finger on the number of men in the English navy in 1852, the year before the Russian war, let him run his eye back over the table to the commencement in 1835, and he will find only four years in the eighteen in which the seamen were *one half* the number (85,500) voted for 1860; and the highest number on record in a year of peace previous to the Russian war was 44,960.

The French state their complement of men for 1860 at 30,588, namely 26,329 afloat, and 4,259 in reserve. But as the accounts for 1860 are not yet definitively audited, this *estimate*, as it may be called, is open to the objection which has been recognised from the first. It will be better to take an authority which will not be disputed on this side of the water. In the month of March following, Lord Clarence Paget† states the number of French seamen at 34,000, of whom 10,000 were from the military con-

* *Hansard*, clviii. 440. † *Hansard*, clxi. 1774.

scription, or landsmen. This statement was repeated by Lord Palmerston.* The reader is now asked to refer to the accounts in the first page, and casting his eye over the table of men in the French navy from 1852 back to the commencement, to compare the 34,000 maintained in 1860 with the numbers in each of those eighteen years. He will not find an increase comparable with that in the English table. In more than one of those years the number exceeded that of 1860, and in many years of Louis Philippe's reign the numbers approached very nearly to that of the above year.

The most important test, however, is the *proportion* of force maintained by each of the two countries, in 1860 and at former periods. The reader's attention is especially asked to this point, for it involves the whole question at issue as to the alleged responsibility of France for the great increase in our naval armaments. Turning to the accounts, we find, on looking down the two columns of seamen, that England generally had about twenty-five or thirty per cent more men than France. In portions of Louis Philippe's reign the superiority was much less on the side of England. In 1840-41, for instance, France approached very nearly to an equality with us. Taking the average number maintained by France for the whole period of eighteen years down to 1852, the year before the Russian war, and comparing it with the average number maintained by England, they were 27,962 French and 38,085 English. In

* *Hansard*, clxi. 1789.

1860, as we have seen, they were 34,000 French and 85,500 English. In other words, in the former period our navy had 10,123 more seamen than the French, and at the latter date the excess was 51,500.

But we are told that the Maritime Inscription gives to the French Government the right of calling upon the whole of the merchant seamen to serve in the Imperial navy. This power was, however, equally possessed by the Government of Louis Philippe. The Maritime Inscription is an institution nearly two centuries old. It is a register which comprises every youth and man following a sea life, or employed on rivers running to the sea, or working in dockyards, etc., who are all liable to serve in the Government navy. The number of available seamen is apt to be much exaggerated, owing to the large proportion of landsmen included in the Inscription. The best way of comparing the naval resources of the two countries is by a reference to the amount of their merchant shipping. England possesses at least four times the tonnage of France, exclusive of colonial shipping; and although the ships of the latter country carry larger crews than those of the former, on the other hand the English people take more freely to the sea for boating, yachting, and fishing, than their neighbours. It is quite certain, then, that England has four times as many sailors to draw on as France, and against the power of impressment possessed by her, we must put the ability to pay for the services of our seamen which is possessed by England. If France has 60,000 merchant seamen from whence to draw by impressment the crews of her Imperial marine, we

have 240,000 to supply the men for the Royal navy, in case of real emergency, by the equally sure process of voluntary enlistment for high pay.*

Lord Hardwicke, who ought to be well informed on the subject, remarked, in the course of this debate, that "it was stated that the French had a reserve of 60,000; but he believed it was known to officers of their own fleet that not more than half that number was at any time available to man the navy. 30,000 trained seamen was, however, a most formidable force, etc."† But let us suppose the whole of these 30,000 men added to the French Imperial marine. Nay, let us even empty all the merchant-ships of their able-bodied crews, and suppose that 50,000 in addition to the present 34,000 were placed at the service of the French Government, and it would still leave the number less by 1,500 than the 85,500 men who had been already voted by our Parliament for 1860; and we were told that the men were pressing to enter the service faster than the Admiralty required them.

* The following statement of the loss and gain by impressment, made by Lord Clarence Paget, shows that it is a very unreliable mode of manning the navy:—"During the years 1811, 1812, and 1813, the closing period of the great war with France, there were pressed into the service 29,405 men, while the number of those who deserted was 27,300—so that the total gain to the country, during those three years, by impressment was 2,105 men. But, in order to bring those men thus compulsorily into the service, 3,000 good sailors had been employed on shore as press-gangs. Therefore the country actually lost about 1,000 men during those three years under the system."—*Hansard*, cliv. 909.

† *Hansard*, clviii. 449.

That, under such circumstances, a Government should lend its sanction to the cry of the alarmists, and pretend to be occupied in securing a reserve to protect us against France, was something like an abuse of public confidence. All this costly and complete preparation to meet some hypothetical danger implies a total want of faith in those latent resources of the nation which patriotism would evoke in the event of a real emergency. It has been frequently said by those most competent to judge, that, in case of actual danger to our shores, the merchant seamen, of whom about one-third are estimated to be always in port, would come forward to a man for the defence of the country.

The opinion of the seamen themselves on this subject was no doubt correctly expressed in a few words of manly common sense, quoted by the Duke of Somerset as the declaration of the sailors of Hartlepool:—They say, "We are doing well in the merchant service, and we do not want to be sent out to any of your little wars—to China, or the River Plate, or any of those places where you are always carrying on some small hostilities; but when it comes to a regular European war, we will take our share in it with any men."*

Such were the naval armaments of the two countries in 1860. England had added to her navy since 1857 nearly as many men as were contained in the whole marine of France. Yet, during the spring and summer of this year, the cry of alarm was still

* *Hansard*, clviii. 444.

heard, and, with a view to the greater security of our shores, the Rifle Corps movement was actively promoted under the most influential patronage. Already it was announced that the numbers enrolled in the Corps amounted to 130,000, and it was said that the foreigner had been impressed in a salutary manner by this martial demonstration. All this was, however, insufficient; and we now approach the climax of the third panic in the gigantic project for fortifications shortly to be initiated in the House of Commons.

A passing notice must be taken, however, of one or two of the little episodes in Parliament, which reflected the nervous excitement of certain classes out of doors. Mr. Kinglake "had been informed that great preparations were being urged forward for the supply of horse transports on the north coast of France."* Sir Charles Napier had heard from an American traveller that there were 14,000 men at work in Toulon dockyards, besides 3,000 convicts.† Both Houses of Parliament were simultaneously agitated upon the subject of a report which had appeared in the newspapers, announcing that English shipwrights were finding employment in Cherbourg and other French dockyards. Numbers of artificers were crowding to the police magistrates to obtain passports. The subject was brought under the notice of the Lords by Viscount Dungannon, and of the Commons by Mr. Johnstone, the latter of whom said, "from information he had received, there were at this moment between 1200 and 1300 of our skilled artisans

* *Hansard*, clvi. 519. † *Hansard*, clviii. 1309.

employed in the French dockyards;" and he added that "it was a very grave matter that some of our best shipwrights should be employed in building French ships."* Lord Clarence Paget replied that the regulations did not allow foreigners to work in French dockyards.

The Duke of Somerset stated, in answer to the question in the Lords, that the only vessel now being built in Cherbourg was a transport; that so far from the French taking on fresh hands, several hundreds of their own workpeople had been lately discharged; and that the British shipwrights who had gone there in consequence of the statements which had appeared in the Engish newspapers, not being able to find work, had "fallen into a pitiable condition, and bitterly repented their credulity."†

On the 23rd July, 1860, Lord Palmerston brought forward the Government measure for "the construction of works for the defence of the royal dockyards and arsenals, and of the ports of Dover and Portland, and for the creation of a central arsenal," when he delivered what was pronounced by Mr. Horsman to be "one of the most serious and alarming speeches he ever heard delivered by a Minister of the Crown in the time of peace," and which he declared he had heard with "satisfaction."‡ This must be admitted to have been only natural, for Mr. Horsman found himself and his views in the ascendant. A Commission had been appointed (at the pressing

* *Hansard*, clix. 209. † *Hansard*, clix. 844.
‡ *Hansard*, clx. 565.

instance, as he informed us, of Sir De Lacy Evans) to devise a scheme of fortifications, whose report, now laid before the House and adopted by the Government, recommended an expenditure, spread over a series of years, of £11,000,000, but which the opponents of the scheme predicted would, according to all analogous precedent, result in an outlay of double the amount.

The most striking feature of this speech is, that it does not contain one syllable of allusion to the navy —for which nearly £13,000,000 had been voted this year—as a means of defending our shores.* The only supposition of a naval battle is, that it occurs after the successful landing of a considerable force for the purpose of destroying our dockyards, and "cutting up our navy by the roots;" and then we are told that, if any naval action were to take place, whatever the success might be, "our enemy would have his dockyards, arsenals, and stores to refit and replenish, and reconstruct his navy; whilst, with our dockyards burnt, and our stores destroyed, we should

* If the Secretary of the Admiralty keep a private diary, there will be found, probably, inserted a commentary on this speech not unlike the following, made on a similar occasion by his predecessor in the reign of Charles II.:—

"*March* 22, 1667.—The Duke of York, instead of being at sea as admiral, is now going from port to port, as he is this day at Harwich, and was the other day with the king at Sheerness, and hath ordered at Portsmouth how fortifications shall be made to oppose the enemy in case of invasion, which is to us a sad consideration, and shameful to the nation, especially for so many proud vaunts as we have made against the Dutch [French ?]."—*Pepys' Diary.*

have no means of refitting our navy and sending it out again to battle."* There is then a description of our large exports and imports, "10,000,000 quarters of corn imported annually, besides enormous quantities of coffee, sugar, tea, and of cotton, which is next in importance to corn for the support of the people;" followed by a picture of the consequences which would result from "such places as Liverpool, Bristol, Glasgow, and London, that is to say the Thames, being blockaded by a hostile force."

But not only is it assumed that an enemy has landed, but that an army is menacing the metropolis itself; and the fortifications of the dockyards are described as the "means for the defence of London, because they will set free a large amount of force for the defence of the capital by operations in the field;" for it is contended that, "if large forces are required to defend your dockyards, you cannot concentrate for the defence of London that amount of force which would be necessary to meet an invading army." And again—"The only defence for London is an army in the field; and any means which enable you to make that army as large as your military establishments will allow are directly subservient to the defence of the capital itself."† There is not one syllable to indicate that we had at that moment a fleet with 85,500 seamen, whilst, according to the authority of the Prime Minister himself, the French navy contained only 34,000 men.

It must, however, here be stated, that Lord Pal-

* *Hansard*, clx. 25. † *Hansard*, clx. 25, 26.

merston has a peculiar theory respecting the effect of steam navigation on our maritime strength, which he proceeds to develop. He contends that, as long as the movement of ships depended on the chances of the weather, "and as long as naval warfare was carried on by means of sailing ships, we were in a position, by our superior skill and aptitude for the sea and for naval combat, to rest upon the strength which we then had afloat."—And he proceeds to say:—.

"The same difficulties which interposed in 1804-5 to prevent a large army drawn up on the opposite coast of the Channel from crossing over to this country, continued to exist; and, therefore, successive Governments were justified in abstaining from any great effort for the purpose of artificial protection to our dockyards, and other vulnerable points. But the introduction of steam changed this state of things. The adoption of steam as a motive power afloat totally altered the character of naval warfare, and deprived us of much of the advantage of our insular position. Operations which, if not impossible, were at least extremely difficult while sailing vessels alone were employed, became comparatively easy the moment that steam was introduced; and, in fact, as I remember Sir Robert Peel stating, steam had bridged the Channel, and, for the purposes of aggression, had almost made this country cease to be an island."*

They who have sat for the last twenty years in the

* *Hansard*, clx. 18.

House of Commons have observed, throughout the successive debates on our National Defences, the constant reiteration of the opinion, on the part of the present Prime Minister,* that the application of steam to navigation has supplied greater facilities for offence than defence; that it has, in fact, deprived us of our great bulwark, by throwing what he has repeatedly called a "steam bridge" over the Channel. It has been remarked, also, that many other speakers have adopted this view, at the same time assigning to him the merit of its authorship. Thus, for instance, in the long debate on the Militia Bill of 1852, Mr. Walpole quoted this argument, as "so forcibly urged, on more than one occasion in the course of the debate, by the noble member for Tiverton;"† and Lord Lyndhurst urged the same view, with a similar acknowledgment of its origin.‡ It would, however, be difficult to adduce the testimony of one eminent authority in favour of this opinion, whilst a host of naval officers and others might be quoted on the other side. Two or three examples must suffice:—

Admiral Berkeley, a Lord of the Admiralty, in his evidence before the Committee on the Navy, in 1848, said, "I believe, myself, that the power which steam has given us, if we make use of it properly, is the best guarantee we have against invasion, if we choose to make use of our resources, and organize those resources in the best manner."§

Sir Thomas Hastings, President of the Commission

* Lord Palmerston. † *Hansard*, cxx. 1176. ‡ *Ante*, 316.
§ *Minutes of Evidence*, 3850.

for Coast Defences, under Sir Robert Peel's Government, in his evidence before the Ordnance Committee of 1849, expressed the same opinion, and almost in the same terms.*

The opinion of Sir Charles Napier was thus expressed:—"With regard to the effect of steam, it had been said that it made blockading impossible; but, on the contrary, he believed that steam had, for the first time, made blockading effectual; for with a steam fleet it would be impossible for the ships blockaded to escape without the knowledge of the blockading squadron, as they had done in former times, when they landed in Ireland, and when the great portion of the fleet escaped from Brest unknown to those who were watching them."†

Captain Scobell, late member for Bath, whose utterances on Naval questions were characterised by a robust common sense, stated in the House that "he remembered being employed in blockading Boulogne, where the invading army of Napoleon was to have embarked, and his opinion was that this country was more vulnerable then than now, the agency of steam had done so much to strengthen it; for calms and fogs would have assisted the enemy much more then than now."‡

Sir Morton Peto thus gives expression to the scientific view of the question:—"We live in eventful times. The future of any nation will no longer be determined by its courage alone; science and its

* *Minutes of Evidence*, 5021. † *Hansard*, clx. 545.
‡ *Hansard*, cxix. 1448.

practical applications will decide our future battles; and surely this should not be a source of weakness, but of strength. We have unlimited supplies of iron and of coal; we have the best practical and scientific engineers. Our country has been the birth-place of the steam-engine itself. The rest of the world have copied us in its application to the thousand ways in which it has contributed to the advancement of civilisation and progress. It is a new thing that has happened to our country, that in naval affairs, instead of leading, we are taught by France and the rest of Europe."*

In a quotation given above, from Lord Palmerston's speech, there is a very curious error in attributing to Sir Robert Peel an opinion on this subject the very opposite of that which he entertained. It is a singular illustration of the fallibility of even the best of memories, that there should have been put into the mouth of that minister, in perfect good faith no doubt, language, respecting a "steam bridge," which he emphatically repudiated so long ago as 1845, when uttered by the very statesman who now assigned to him its authorship. The incident is so curious that, for correct illustration, the quotations must be given textually, and in juxtaposition: —

Lord Palmerston (July 30, 1845). "In reference to steam navigation, what he said was, that the progress which had been made had converted the ordinary means of transport into a steam-bridge."†

Sir Robert Peel (same date in reply). "The noble

* *Hansard*, clxii. 437. † *Hansard*, lxxxii. 1233.

lord (Lord Palmerston) appeared to retain the impression that our means of defence were rather abated by the discovery of steam navigation. He was not at all prepared to admit that. He thought that the demonstration which we could make of our steam-navy was one which would surprise the world; and as the noble lord had spoken of steam-bridges, he would remind him that there were two parties who could play at making them."*

Lord Palmerston (July 23, 1860). "And, in fact, as I remember Sir Robert Peel stating, steam had bridged the Channel, and for the purpose of aggression had almost made this country cease to be an island."†

The above citations, if they do not warrant the conclusion that the theory of steam navigation having rendered our shores more vulnerable to attack originated exclusively with the present Prime Minister, prove at least, beyond dispute, that, in the costly application of that theory to this plan of fortifications, he has been acting in opposition to the recorded opinions of the most eminent statesman, and the highest professional and practical authorities of the age.

But to return to the speech before us. There is one striking resemblance between all the oratorical efforts on the invasion question, in their total omission of all allusion to the numerical strength of our own forces. If the reader will take the trouble to refer back to the speech delivered by the noble lord

* *Hansard*, lxxxii. 1233. † *Hansard*, clx. 18.

on the 30th July, 1845, when urging Sir Robert Peel's Government to an increase of our armaments, it will be found that our peril then arose from the existence in France of an army of "340,000 men, fully equipped, including a large force of cavalry and artillery; and, in addition to that, 1,000,000 of the National Guard."* The danger on the present occasion is owing to "an army of six hundred and odd thousand men, of whom four hundred and odd thousand are actually under arms, and the remainder are merely on furlough, and can be called into the ranks in a fortnight."† The million of National Guards of France had disappeared; but there is no allusion to the addition which we had in the mean time made to our own force of more than 200,000 volunteers and militia, besides the large increase of regulars.

But this characteristic omission will be more apparent in the case of the navies. In 1845, we were told that the French had a fleet in "commission and half commission" equal to that of this country. We are now informed that "the utmost exertions have been made, and still are making, to create a navy very nearly equal to our own—a navy which cannot be required for purposes of defence for France, and which, therefore, we are justified in looking upon as a possible antagonist we may have to encounter—a navy which, under present arrangements, would give to our neighbours the means of transporting, within a few hours, a large and formidable number of troops

* *Ante*, p. 223.

† *Hansard*, clx. 22.

to our coast."* To bring the statement that the French Government had been, and still was, striving to create a navy very nearly equal to our own, once more to the test of figures, let us compare the increase which had taken place in the two navies in the interval between 1847, the last year of Louis Philippe's reign, and 1860, the year in which this speech was made. The comparison is limited to the men, because, the definitive audit of the French accounts not being yet published for 1860, it will avoid all dispute to take the present number of French seamen on the authority of Lord Palmerston at 34,000,† although the French *Estimate* admits only 30,588.

Strength of the English and French Navies in Number of Seamen, in the Years 1847 *and* 1860.

	1847. No. of Men.	1860. No. of Men.		Increase.
English	44,969	85,500	English	40,531
French	32,169	34,000	French	1,831

It will be seen, by the above figures, that whilst England had increased her force by 40,531 men, France had augmented hers by only 1831. If the French estimate of the number of their seamen be correctly given, which has not been disproved by any statement of facts, then the force maintained by them is actually less in 1860 than it was in 1847. Nor must it be forgotten that, in proposing the Navy Estimates, the Secretary of the Admiralty had informed us a few months before that we had 456 steamers afloat to 244 French. It has been shown, too, that our dock-

* *Hansard*, clx. 23. † *Hansard*, clxi. 1789.

yard expenditure for wages in 1859 was £1,582,112, whilst in France it amounted to £772,931, or less than one-half; and, in proof that this activity in the Government yards had been unabated in 1860, it is only necessary to refer to the First Lord's statement on the 1st May, already quoted,* that during the preceding eight months more men had been employed in our dockyards than at any previous time, not even excepting the period of the great war with France which terminated in 1815.

It must here be mentioned that this state of things led to the publication of a semi-official French pamphlet, in the summer of 1860, under the sanction of the Minister of State, with a view to expose the unprecedented and disproportionate increase of our navy, as compared with that of France. This pamphlet† contains a detailed comparison of the English and French naval expenditures, accompanied by elaborate statistics of their respective forces. The writer of these pages has, however, preferred to rely exclusively upon official sources of information; namely, the definitively audited accounts of France, our own parliamentary reports, and the statements of our official men.

Such were the comparative forces of the two countries when the speech under consideration was delivered. Englishmen had a perfect right, if they saw in the act no derogation from the attitude of their fathers—who boasted of needing "no bulwarks, no

* *Ante*, p. 359.

† *The Navy Budgets of France and England.* By M. Cucheval Clarigny.

towers along the steep"—to ensconce themselves behind fortifications, in addition to a fleet of more than double the strength of that of France. It was purely a question of security and national honour, and in itself was not an aggressive measure towards other countries. It was made an act of offence towards France solely by the speech which accompanied it, and which was an amplification of the invasion-speeches of 1845 and 1851. The objects of the invaders were now more minutely described: they were to make a sudden descent on our shores: to burn and destroy our naval arsenals: and this not with a view to conquest; for the speaker "dismissed from his mind the idea that any foreign power would dream of conquering this country with the view of permanent possession;" nor did he believe that an invasion would "ever be likely to be attended with permanent advantage to an enemy, except in so far as it might inflict injury on this country." The argument, in fact, assumed that we were in precisely the same state of insecurity as if our neighbours had been a barbarous tribe, whose actions were inspired by mere love of vengeance and plunder, without any restraining forethought or calculation of consequences; and who afforded none of those hostages for peace which are to be found in the possession of great wealth, or extensive manufactures and commerce.

There was a tone of assumed defencelessness on our part pervading the whole speech, which found repeated utterance in such phrases as, "You cannot, you are not entitled to rely on the forbearance of a stronger neighbour;" or, "For the sake of peace, it is desirable that we should not live upon forbearance,

but that we should be able fully and effectually to defend ourselves." The speaker then assumes that a difficulty has arisen with some foreign power, and says, "With the utmost desire that such matters may be amicably adjusted; yet, if one country is greatly the stronger, and another country greatly the weaker, it is very difficult for any arrangement to be made;" and then, that there may be no doubt which is the feebler party, it is assumed that "the weaker power consists of a high-spirited and patriotic nation, with free institutions, and with the popular feeling manifested on every occasion by means of a free press." Now, if such language had been addressed to a people whose shores were really in danger from a more powerful neighbour, this would have been a legitimate appeal to their patriotism; but when it emanated from the Prime Minister of a nation whose ability to defend its coasts was double that of its neighbour to assail them, such an attitude was very similar to what, in individual life, would be represented by a man, in possession of both his hands, taunting and accusing another, possessing but one, with the design of assaulting him.

There was a remarkable contrast between the present speech and those delivered by the same speaker in 1845 and 1851—a contrast all the more significant that he was now Prime Minister, whereas on former occasions he spoke only as an opposition Member of Parliament; namely, that it did not content itself with an abstract hypothesis of a possible invasion, but pointed to France as the menacing cause of actual danger. The cry of "Wolf!" had been so repeatedly heard for fifteen years, that it

seemed as though it were necessary not only to name the wolf itself, but to depict the scowling aspect and crouching attitude of the beast of prey. The following passage leaves no doubt about the quarter from whence the attack was to be expected:—

"Now, Sir, as to the necessity for these works, I think it is impossible for any man to cast his eyes over the face of Europe, and to see and hear what is passing, without being convinced that the future is not free from danger. It is difficult to say where the storm may burst; but the horizon is charged with clouds which betoken the possibility of a tempest. *The Committee of course knows that, in the main, I am speaking of our immediate neighbours across the Channel, and there is no use in disguising it.*"*

To appreciate fully the scope and bearing of these words, it is necessary to refer to the precise circumstances under which they were spoken. The speech was delivered on the 23rd July, 1860. At that moment, the negociation of the details of the Commercial Treaty with France, upon the liberal arrangement of which depended the whole success of the measure, was at its most critical and important stage. The public mind was under considerable misapprehension respecting the progress of the measure, owing to the systematic misrepresentations which were promulgated in certain political circles, and by a portion of the press.† The British ministry alone

* *Hansard*, clx. 21.

* In justice to the newspaper press, which almost universally took a hopeful view of the Treaty, and gave a generous support

knew that, up to that time, the French Government had manifested a disposition to carry out the details of the Treaty with even unexpected liberality, and they could not have been unaware how important it was, at such a juncture, to preserve a conciliatory tone towards that Government. It was at this critical moment that the speech burst upon the negociators in Paris. Had its object been to place the British Commissioners at the greatest possible disadvantage, it could not have more effectually accomplished the purpose. It cut the ground from under their feet, in so far as the French Government had been actuated by the political motive (apart from politico-economical considerations) of seeking to strengthen the friendly relations of the two countries as represented by their governments. This plea of high state-policy, with which the Emperor's government had met the complaints of the powerful interests which believed themselves compromised by the Treaty, was in a moment silenced and turned against itself. The offensive passages in the speech were instantly transferred to the pages of the protectionist organs, accompanied with loud expostulations addressed to their own government: "You are sacrificing us," they said, "in the hope of conciliating the political alliance of our ancient rival; and now, behold the reward you are receiving at the hands of

to the negociations, the notorious exception must be mentioned. The *Times* persisted in its attacks and misrepresentations, until silenced by the all but unanimous expression of opinion, on the part of the manufacturing and commercial community, in favour of the Treaty.

the Prime Minister of England." These taunts resounded in the *salons* of the enlightened Minister of Commerce, and murmurs were heard even in the palace itself. A profound sensation was produced among all classes by this speech; and no other words could adequately express the emotions experienced by the French negociators but astonishment and indignation. Had the Emperor seized the occasion for instantly suspending the negociations, he would have undoubtedly performed a most popular part; but on this, as on other occasions, his habitual calmness and self-mastery prevailed, and to these qualities must be mainly attributed the successful issue of the Treaty.

It is impossible to construct any theory of motives to account for this speech, consistent with a wise or serious statesmanship; and it probably met with the only appropriate commentary in the following remarks, which fell from Mr. Bernal Osborne:—

"At the commencement of the session I gave my humble support to a Commercial Treaty with France, under the idea that I was promoting good and substantial relations with that country. The noble lord (Lord Palmerston) has told us that we should not speak of this Treaty with levity; but his actions are inconsistent with his words, for the resolution before us is the oddest sequel imaginable to a Commercial Treaty. After taking off all the duties on French manufactures, we are asked to vote nominally £9,000,000, though I believe it will ultimately be nearer £20,000,000, for the construction of defences to keep out our friends and customers. Why, Sir, if this was

not an expensive amusement, it would be the most ludicrous proceeding ever proposed to a deliberative assembly."*

This project was voted by the House on the 2nd August, after a few hours' debate, in which scarcely any of the leading members spoke. Mr. Sidney Herbert, who took a prominent part in the discussion, declared that it was unwise in England "to leave a great temptation—to leave her vast property and her reputation at stake, and at the mercy of any nation which may choose to send an expedition in consequence of some diplomatic quarrel;"†—totally oblivious of the 456 Government steamers, the 85,500 seamen, and upwards of 300,000 armed men, including volunteers, then ready to meet an invading enemy.‡ This was spoken ten days after the delivery of Lord Palmerston's speech, which had, of course, produced its natural effect out of doors, and to which Mr. Herbert could thus triumphantly appeal, in replying to Mr. Bright:—

"Is it not a fact, I ask him, that the whole nation is full of alarm and suspicion? The people feel that they ought to obtain security at any price. We have, therefore, spent a large sum in putting our stores

* *Hansard*, clx. 553. † *Hansard*, clx. 506.

‡ With a similar obliviousness of our own armaments, the Fortifications Bill was thus greeted by the Earl of Ellenborough in the Lords:—"I have, during the last thirteen years, endeavoured to draw the attention of this House and the country to the almost defenceless state of the realm, earnestly desiring that we should not remain unarmed in the midst of an armed world."—*Hansard*, clx. 1563.

and munitions of war in order. We have an increase of the army—not a large increase, it is true, but still an increase. All these things are cheerfully borne by the people, and more is called for—more, perhaps, than the Government are willing to do. Is not that an indication that there must, in the minds of an immense majority of the people, be some cause for alarm? The country feels that it is not in a proper state of defence, and that, if we deal with the question at all, we should deal with the whole of it if we can. Such are the feelings which I believe animate the public out of doors."*

This is a fair illustration of the manner in which panics are created and sustained. A Government proposes a large expenditure for armaments, on the plea that France is making vast warlike preparations; and the public, being thereby impressed with a sense of impending danger, takes up the cry of alarm: when the Minister quotes the echo of his own voice as a justification of his policy, and a sufficient answer to all opponents. This mode of argument was thus commented upon on a subsequent occasion by Mr. Bright, when replying to another speaker:—

"But he knows perfectly well that what is called the country must necessarily take its opinions at second-hand. Manufacturers, farmers, professional men, shopkeepers, artisans, and labourers do not con over these blue-books of ours, and read the accounts minutely given in the French votes. They

* *Hansard*, clx. 502.

know very little of this. They take their opinions from what is stated in this House and in the public press. And, of course, when there are men of the high position of the noble lord at the head of the Government and others associated with him, who have been in the service of the country for twenty, thirty, or forty years, it is only reasonable that the opinions which they express, and the statements which are made in their hearing, but which they do not take the trouble to contradict, should sink into the minds of the people, and become with them a fixed belief, although founded upon no knowledge whatever."*

This gigantic scheme of fortifications is without a parallel in any single project of the kind; and, judging by the analogy of Keyham and the Channel Islands, it may be predicted that, if allowed to go on, it will eventually involve an expenditure of double the amount of the original estimate. In the course of the debate Mr. Sidney Herbert stated that "it was chiefly on the advice of Sir Howard Douglas that the Government acted in making the proposition they now made."† Now, it is known that this

* *Hansard*, clxi. 1785.

† *Hansard*, clx. 562. It is one of the evils of our day that men are often retained in the direction of great national undertakings long beyond the period of life when they are considered eligible for employment in conducting private concerns.—Sir Howard Douglas was, when consulted by the Government on this occasion, in his 83rd year; an age when men may be said to live only in the past, and to retain, for the affairs of this life, scarcely any interest in the future.

officer entertained to the last a faith in large wooden ships, and even believed that sailing line-of-battle ships would play a part in future naval wars. He could form no idea of Portsmouth, Plymouth, and the other dockyards, but that which was suggested by the past appearance of their harbours, crowded with wooden vessels, some in commission or half commission, some afloat in ordinary, and others in process of construction; with timber enough in store for two or three years' consumption, at the rate of thirty or forty thousand loads a-year. The scheme of fortifications approved by him might be very consistent with these views.

But if, in accordance with the advice of Sir William Armstrong, Mr. Fairbairn, Sir Morton Peto, and other high authorities, on whose engineering skill the Government profess to rely, our ships of war are henceforth constructed entirely of iron (not wood cased in iron), and if they are built, as they will be if the country be wise, by contract in private yards, the "roots" of our navy will henceforth be on the Clyde, the Thames, the Mersey, and the Tyne, and not in Portsmouth or Plymouth. As for repairs, a vessel built wholly of iron four or five inches thick will, like an iron bridge, be practically indestructible. With railroads running from the interior into all our dockyards, perishable stores for the navy may be kept at the Tower, Weedon, or other inland depôts. It is, besides, notorious that great waste and abuse of various kinds arise from the unnecessarily large amount of these stores kept on hand.

With the revolution thus glanced at now going on

in naval armaments, it is possible that when the grand scheme of fortifications for Portsmouth, extending to the South Downs, are complete, to prevent the "cradle of our navy from being burnt and destroyed," an enemy will find very few combustible materials in that arsenal except the coal. Our dockyards will then possess, comparatively, only a traditional importance, unless, indeed, we adopt the dishonouring theory that our fleets require fortified places in which to take refuge from an enemy.

The first proof to be offered by the Government, to whatever party it may belong, of the triumph of common sense in the conduct of our national affairs, will be the suspension of this panic-begotten scheme.

The speech of the Premier was calculated to give a renewed impulse to the agitation out of doors; but, owing to a cause which will be immediately explained, a reaction was taking place on the invasion question in the manufacturing districts, and the most exciting of the martial demonstrations which were witnessed during the ensuing autumn and winter occurred in obscure agricultural places.*

* The following specimen will suffice to recall to the reader's recollection the scenes that were passing at the close of 1860:—

"Dinner to Major Watlington, M.P. for South Essex.—On Wednesday afternoon, Major J. W. Perry Watlington, M.P. was entertained at dinner at Harlow Bush House by the members of the B troop of West Essex Yeomanry Cavalry, on his promotion from the rank of captain of the troop to the rank of major of the regiment. Major Watlington having thanked the company for the compliment paid him, and made some remarks regarding the character of the yeomanry cavalry and the volunteer rifle move-

During the negociation of the details of the French commercial treaty, which extended over nearly the whole of 1860, deputations from our manufacturing districts, and from the metropolis, paid repeated visits to Paris, to afford information to the British Commissioners respecting their various productions. These intelligent capitalists returned to England impressed with the conviction that a great commercial revolution was being inaugurated in France; and this conviction found expression in the reports which the deputations made to their constituents. A natural revulsion from the state of panic followed. Reflecting men began to ask themselves if it could be possible that the most logical people were contemplating at the same time a policy of free trade and of unprovoked hostile aggression,—that the Emperor, whose great intelligence no one disputed, could really be aiming at pursuing, in his own person, the incompatible careers of the first Napoleon and Sir Robert Peel.

But the warning voice of the Prime Minister, which still rang in the public ear, coupled with the

ment, proceeded to say that if this country was in danger it would be necessary to make preparation; but when such a man as Lord Palmerston, who had the command of all the resources of knowledge and information to enable him to know correctly the state of the pulse of the Emperor of the French, and tell rightly to what end each pulsation of that pulse tended, asked the House of Commons to grant millions for our defence in fortifications—when he pointed to the other side of the Channel, and held the Emperor of the French up as the bugbear, then it would be positive madness to doubt there was danger, and it would be culpable negligence not to be prepared for it. (Hear, hear.)"

gigantic project of fortifications, made even intelligent men pause in their final judgment upon the designs of the ruler of France. This conflict of public opinion induced several members of parliament to institute a personal inquiry into the naval preparations of France. Mr. Dalglish, M.P. for Glasgow, who had served on a Commission* for inquiring into the management of the dockyards, visited France to examine the system of government accounts, and to inform himself as to the progress making in her naval armaments; and he took an opportunity of saying in the House that "having been to Toulon and Cherbourg, within the last fortnight, he could assure the hon. gentleman, the member for Norfolk, who appeared not to have got over the panic about a French invasion, that all his fears were groundless, so far as the preparations connected with ship-

* This Commission reported as follows:

The Royal Commission, appointed in 1860, to inquire into the management of the dockyards, report that the control and management of dockyards are inefficient from the following causes:—

1. The constitution of the Board of Admiralty.
2. The defective organization of the subordinate departments.
3. The want of clear and well-defined responsibility.
4. The absence of any means, both now and in times past, of effectually checking expenditure, from the want of accurate accounts.

"The want of accurate accounts," seems to be a chronic malady at the Admiralty, if we may judge by the following penitent confession of the quaint Secretary, in the time of Charles II.:—

"*Nov.* 10, 1666.—The Parliament did fall foul of our accounts again yesterday: and we must arme to have them examined, which I am sorry for; it will bring great trouble to me, and shame to the office."—*Pepys' Diary.*

building in those quarters were concerned."* Sir Morton Peto, who had been largely connected with industrial undertakings in that country, dispatched an intelligent agent to report to him the state of its various dockyards. Every facility for these investigations was afforded by the French Government; and the result was invariably to disprove the statements of the alarmists, and to corroborate the accounts contained in the semi-official pamphlet of M. Cucheval Clarigny.

Mr. Lindsay, M.P. for Sunderland, also visited Paris, and sought an interview with the Minister of Marine, to obtain information respecting the actual state of the French navy; and he was so convinced, by the frank and unreserved explanations of that Minister, of the erroneous impression which prevailed in England, that he communicated the information, in the first place, by letter, to Lord Clarence Paget, and afterwards to the House of Commons, soon after the opening of the session. It seems from the following extract from his speech, that the French Minister, imitating the example of his predecessor, M. Ducos, in 1853, invited our Secretary of the Admiralty (but in vain) to make a personal inspection of the French dockyards:—

"The Minister of Marine was anxious that the feeling of alarm in England on that subject should be got rid of. He said 'I have shown you everything; I have given you official documents; I will do more if you desire. Will you go and visit our

* *Hansard*, clxii. 465.

dockyards and arsenals? I will send a gentleman with you, who will throw open everything to you, and you may see with your own eyes everything.' He (Mr. Lindsay) declined, saying he was tired of wandering about; but the statement which he had received, confirmed by these books, was so different from what was commonly believed, that he had sent the figures of the Minister of Marine to his noble friend the Secretary of the Admiralty, and extended to him the invitation of the Minister of Marine to visit the French dockyards and arsenals. He had received a reply, in which the noble lord pleaded want of time, and pressing engagements, but still seemed to entertain doubts as to the accuracy of the statements."*

On the 11th March, 1861, the Secretary of the Admiralty introduced the Navy Estimates for the ensuing year. He stated, "that in consequence of the termination of the China war, the number of seamen actually borne in the previous year had not exceeded 81,100, being 4,400 less than the 85,500 voted; and he now asked for 78,200, which he considered to be only a reduction of 2,900 upon the force of the previous year." "But," he added, "the House would be glad to hear that there was a force of something like 25,000 reserves, available at a moment's notice if an emergency should make it necessary to man a large fleet."

With respect to ships, he proceeded, "We have expended during the present year, or, at least, shall

* *Hansard*, clxi. 1147.

have expended by the end of the month, no less than 80,000 loads of timber—more than double the ordinary rate of consumption," and he laid before the House the result in vessels: "We have built during this year 9,075 tons of line-of-battle ships, 12,189 tons of frigates, 4,138 tons of corvettes, 6,367 tons of sloops, 1,409 tons of gun and despatch vessels, and 102 tons of gun-boats, making a total of 33,280 tons." He announced that, for the ensuing year, it was the intention of the Government to confine themselves to the construction of frigates and smaller vessels; adding, "I may further observe that, so far as large vessels are concerned, we are in a very satisfactory position."* At a subsequent stage of these naval discussions, he defined more clearly this position by a comparison with other countries, showing that we had seventeen more of these large ships (besides block-ships) than all the rest of the world—"We have," he said, "67 line-of-battle ships built or building. France has 37, Spain 3, Russia 9, and Italy 1, making 50."† The nine coast-guard block-ships have again passed entirely into oblivion!

Bearing in mind that this prodigious increase in large wooden vessels had been going on after actual experiment had verified the success of iron-cased batteries in resisting combustible shells, it is really a waste almost unparalleled for recklessness and magnitude. It may be illustrated in private life, by the supposition that a large proprietor of stage-coaches doubled his stock of vehicles and horses at the very

* *Hansard*, clxi. 1747. † *Hansard*, clxii. 442.

time when the locomotive and the railroad had entered into successful competition with the traffic of the turnpike-roads. A reaction against this policy now manifested itself in the very able opposition speeches delivered by Mr. Baxter, Mr. Lindsay, and Mr. Bright.

Lord Palmerston took a part in the debate. "The French," he said, "make no secret of their preparations; but when some well-intentioned gentleman asks them if they really mean to invade this country, if they really have any hostile intentions towards us, of course they say 'Not the least in the world:' their feeling is one of perfect sympathy and friendship with us, and that all their preparations are for their own self-advancement."* And, again, "Really, Sir, it is shutting one's eyes to notorious facts to go on contending that the policy of France, of which I certainly do not complain—has not for a great length of time been to get up a navy which shall be equal, if not superior, to our own."†

For the last occasion let us bring this statement that the French had for a long time been trying to be our equals, if not superiors, at sea, to the test of figures—not French, but British figures. In this very debate, both Lord Palmerston and Lord Clarence Paget give the French naval force at 34,000 seamen, which shall be accepted as correct, though the French *estimate* is under 31,000. The Secretary of the Admiralty had, just before the Premier spoke, proposed a vote of 78,200 men for our navy for 1861. Now

* *Hansard*, clxi. 1791. † *Hansard*, clxi. 1788.

let the reader turn once more to the table in the first page, and he will seek in vain for any year, (except 1859 and 1860, when the same noble lord was Prime Minister), in which our force was double that of France, or even approached to such a disproportionate strength. And it must be remembered that the French consider that the reserve of 25,000 brings our force up to 100,000 men.

But in order to test the statement, that France had been trying to get up a navy equal to our own, by a comparison of ships as well as men, the following extract is given from the speech delivered the same evening by the Secretary of the Admiralty:—

"He assumed that hon. gentlemen would accept the statement of the British navy he had laid before them as correct, and that showed that we had 53 screw line-of-battle ships afloat and 14 building and converting, making a total of 67. The French had 35 afloat and 2 building, making a total of 37. We had 31 screw and 9 paddle frigates afloat and 12 building, making a total of 52; the French had 21 screw and 18 paddle frigates afloat and 8 building, making a total of 47. He did not think that the discussion had extended to the smaller classes of steam-ships; but including them, the French had 266 vessels afloat and 61 building, making a total of 327; while we had 505 afloat and 57 building, making a total of 562."*

Now let us take, for comparison, the large ships; for our immense superiority in smaller vessels has

* *Hansard*, clxi. 1773.

been admitted from the first. The constant cry of alarm has been founded on the assertion that France was attempting to rival us in ships of the line. The date at which we have now arrived, and when the speech from which the above extract is taken was delivered, is the 11th March, 1861. It is here said that France has thirty-seven line-of-battle ships built and building. On the 18th May, 1857, nearly four years previously, Sir Charles Wood, then First Lord, stated that France had forty liners built and building.* The same number is given for 1858 in the Report already quoted, presented to Parliament by Lord Derby's Government.† And on the 25th February, 1859, the country was startled by the statement of Sir John Pakington, that England and France were on an equality of twenty-nine‡ each "completed" ships of the line. What, then, has been the progress made by the French in nearly four years, during which we had the great invasion-speeches of Lord Lyndhurst and Mr. Horsman, the almost incessant agitation of Sir Charles Napier, the rifle corps movement, the unparalleled expenditure in the dockyards, the gigantic fortification scheme, and all on the pretext that France was making great efforts to rival us at sea? Why,—it turns out, on the authority of our own Government, that France had fewer line-of-battle ships in 1861 than she was alleged to possess in 1857. She had forty built or building in 1857, and thirty-seven in 1861, or less

* *Ante*, p. 277.

† *Parliamentary Paper*, 182, 1859, p. 16.

‡ *Ante*, p. 294.

by three:—the French Government, be it remembered, state officially their number to be only thirty-five. Our own liners, which were fifty in 1857, were sixty-seven in 1861 (besides the block-ships), being an increase of seventeen. The number of French frigates is given at forty-seven in 1861, and they were stated by Sir John Pakington, in 1859, at forty-six,* being an increase of one only in two years. Our own frigates were put down at thirty-four in 1859,† and fifty-two in 1861, being an increase of eighteen.

It would be a waste of the reader's time and patience to offer any further evidence in a case which, having been subjected to so many tests, is at last demonstrated to be utterly groundless on the authority of British officials and our own public documents.

In the above quotation from Lord Palmerston's speech, the allegation, that the French had for a long time been trying to equal or surpass us at sea, is accompanied by the remark, "of which I certainly do not complain." If such a design on the part of the French Government really did exist (which has been disproved), it would be a matter of grave concern, and even of complaint, to the tax-paying people of this country: for with what legitimate or peaceful object could that Government be seeking to disturb the immemorial relations which England and France have borne to each other as maritime powers?

* *Ante*, p. 294. † Ibid.

France possesses less than a fourth of our mercantile marine: she has not, perhaps, the hundredth part of our possessions to defend beyond the seas: she has more than double our military force; and, whilst her land frontier gives her access to the Continent, and thereby to the whole world, we have no means of communication with any other country but by water: She has, therefore, no necessity for, and no legitimate pretensions to an equality with us at sea; nor is there in her history any precedent for such a policy. If, under such circumstances, the present French ruler attempted for the first time to equal, if not surpass us in naval armaments, the reasonable conclusion would be, that either he had some sinister purpose in view, or that he was a rash and unreflecting, and therefore a dangerous neighbour. If, after the offer of frank explanations on our part, with a view to avert so irrational a waste, that ruler persisted in his extraordinary preparations, there is no amount of expenditure which this country would not bear to maintain our due superiority at sea. But such a state of things would be accompanied with a sense of grievance; and it would make it quite inconsistent with all serious statesmanship to attempt to unite the two Governments in alliances for peace or war in other parts of the world, until the vital question respecting our own security at home had received a better solution than is offered by the maintenance of a war-establishment to protect us from an invasion by a so-called friend and ally.

The reaction which had taken place in intelligent minds against our injudicious naval armaments found

expression in the House on the 11th April, 1861, when Mr. Lindsay, after an able speech, carried a resolution for putting an end to the further construction of large wooden vessels. The speech of Sir Morton Peto in support of this measure contains much valuable advice for the guidance of Government in iron slip-building, and Sir Joseph Paxton and Mr. Dalglish spoke with practical force for the motion. Not one word could be said, in any quarter, in behalf of wooden ships of the line; and a pledge was extorted from Government that no more of these vessels should be built, and that those still on the stocks should remain unfinished; thus tacitly admitting that the immense fleet of line-of-battle ships now afloat were worse than useless, and that if they had not been built, under the excitement of the panic, they would not now have been ordered to be constructed. This might be inferred from the remark which fell from Captain Jervis. "The shell," said he, "now acted as a mine; it burst in passing through the side of the vessel, and would so shatter it that wooden line-of-battle ships would be nothing better than mere slaughter houses."* In fact, it is doubted by intelligent naval authorities whether, in case of a war between two maritime powers, wooden ships of the line would be ever subjected to the fire of modern shell guns.

We now arrive at the last, and not the least characteristic scene of the third panic.

On the 31st May, 1861, Sir John Pakington rose

* *Hansard*, clxii. 460.

in the House, and addressing the Speaker said, "Sir, I now rise to call attention to a subject the importance of which no one will deny. I have received information with respect to the French Government, in building armour-covered ships, to which I think it my duty to call the attention of the House and of her Majesty's Government without any loss of time." The right hon. gentleman then proceeded to say that he was about to make his important statement on the authority of a British naval officer of high professional reputation, who, during the last three weeks, had visited all the French ports and arsenals with the exception of Toulon; but he weakened the zest of the coming disclosure by adding that Admiral Elliot did not wish to be under the suspicion of having acted as a spy:—"I should, therefore," said the speaker, "state that whatever information he has obtained was obtained in an open manner, and he visited the French dockyards with the advantage of having received the permission of the Minister of Marine. [Mr. Lindsay; hear, hear!] I understand the motive of that cheer, and it is only due to the French Government to state that on the part of the French Admiralty there has been nothing like any intention to conceal its preparations." There is a curious resemblance, in the tone of this speech, to that which was delivered in moving the Navy Estimates of 1859; the same disavowal of the idea of alarming: the like absence of any exclusive information; and yet the apparent disposition to invest the whole proceeding with the character of a revelation. "I have no wish," he said, "to excite alarm by making

this statement. I make it because I think it my duty to communicate to the Government and the House, in this public manner, information of so startling a character."

The statement thus heralded was, that the French were preparing to build fifteen armour-plated ships, besides nine gun-boats and floating batteries. There was not a word of information as to the precise stages in which these twenty-four vessels and batteries had been found; and it was admitted that some (it was not said how many) "were only lately laid down." Lord Clarence Paget* spoke subsequently of nine having, during the last few months, been "laid down, or prepared to be laid down;" and, on the same occasion, Lord Palmerston† said the French Government were "beginning" to lay them down. No test of accuracy can be applied to the vague statements respecting those projected vessels; but the allusion to the *Magenta* and *Solferino*, two ships which everybody knew to be building as the companions to *La Gloire*, is more precise. "These two vessels," said the right hon. gentleman, "are to be launched in the ensuing month, and to be added immediately to the strength of the French navy." At the time when these pages are going to press (March, 1862,) these ships are still unfinished, and are expected to remain so for several months. Throwing aside all dependence on the wooden fleets which the Admiralty had just completed, he proceeded, for the second time, to proclaim the danger of French maritime ascendancy:—

* *Hansard*, clxiii. 425. † *Hansard*, ib. 535.

"Why are these preparations being made in France? I will not enter into the motives by which the French Government may be influenced in making such efforts. Every one is able to judge for himself for what ultimate end these preparations are intended. The point to which I invite attention is, that whatever may be the motive of France, the practical result is that we are rapidly becoming the second maritime power of Europe. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this statement. Is it true, or is it not true? If it be true, what are the intentions of the Government?"*

Admiral Walcott confirmed the statement of the preceding speaker, and said, "he felt quite convinced that a neighbouring country was at that moment in command of a most formidable number of iron-cased ships." And Sir James Elphinstone, also a naval officer, followed in the same strain, declaring that the report they had just heard "ought justly to alarm the Government and people of this country."

It is a curious feature in this discussion, that the alarm was chiefly confined to the naval officers; whilst those members who resisted what Mr. Dalglish designated as the "attempt that had been made by the right hon. member for Droitwich to startle the country," represented precisely those constituencies whose interests would be the most compromised by the loss of the protection which our navy is designed to afford. Mr. Lindsay (Sunderland), Mr. Dalglish (Glasgow), and Mr. Baxter (Dundee), who had

* *Hansard*, clxiii. 417.

spoken previously, all represent important commercial sea-ports.

But to return to the question put by Sir John Pakington — "Why are these preparations being made in France?" There was not one of his audience so competent to answer this question as the right hon. gentleman himself: for, when he was First Lord of the Admiralty, he laid on the table of the House, on the 4th April, 1859, that Report on "The Comparative State of the Navies of England and France," to which allusion has been so frequently made,—drawn up by his own confidential officials for the special information of the Government,—in which the following passage occurs, with reference to the future policy of the French Government:—

"It is stated that these iron-sided ships, of which two are more than half completed, will be substituted for line-of-battle ships. Their timbers are of the scantling of a three-decker; they are to have thirty-six heavy guns, most of them rifled 50-pounders, which will throw an 80 lb. hollow percussion shot; they will be cased with iron; and *so convinced do naval men seem to be in France of the irresistible qualities of these ships, that they are of opinion that no more ships of the line will be laid down, and that in ten years that class of vessels will have become obsolete.*"*

With this document in his hand, the right hon. gentleman commenced, in 1859, with frantic haste, the reconstruction of our wooden navy, which was carried on still more frantically by his successor;

* *Parliamentary Paper*, No. 182—1859, p. 15.

notwithstanding that the Report of 1859 informed them that "no line-of-battle ship had been laid down since 1856, in France, and there had not been a single three-decker on the stocks since that year."* And now, on the 31st May, 1861, when, as Mr. Lindsay stated in the course of this debate, England possessed a greater number of efficient steam-ships of war than all Europe, and when the Secretary of the Navy himself admitted that we had seventeen more line-of-battle ships than all the rest of the world (besides the nine block-ships),† the House was startled with the declaration that we were rapidly becoming the second maritime power of Europe, because France had one iron-clad frigate *(La Gloire)* at sea, whilst our own much more powerful ship, the *Warrior*, still wanted a few months for completion!

Now, let us see whether France had taken any clandestine or precipitate steps to justify her being teased and worried by such demonstrations as these: for it must not be supposed that the sensibilities of the French people are not wounded‡ by these impu-

* *Parliamentary Paper*, No. 182—1859, p. 19.

† *Hansard*, clxii. 442.

‡ The following is extracted from an article on this subject in the *Journal des Débats* :—"Is there not something calculated to try the patience of a less excitable people than ours, to find ourselves constantly denounced as plotting an invasion of England —and denounced by whom? By those whom we have not invaded—by those who for three centuries have hired all the coalitions formed against us—by those who for three centuries have always marched in the front ranks of the invaders of our national territory. Is there nothing calculated to wound the just pride of a people, not wanting in self-respect, to find ourselves incessantly called to account respecting our navy—and by

tations of sinister designs, reiterated by members of parliament who have filled the highest public offices. The value and efficiency of iron-clad vessels were proved (as will be seen immediately) to the knowledge of both England and France in 1854. England immediately possessed herself of double the number of iron-cased floating *batteries* built by France. The keel of the first *sea-going* frigate of this class, *La Gloire*, was laid down by the French Government in June, 1858. In the parliamentary report, dated January 6th, 1859, so frequently quoted, it is stated that this vessel is half completed. She made her first trial trip in August, 1860. *And she was the only completed iron-clad sea-going vessel possessed by France on the* 31*st May*, 1861, *when Sir John Pakington made his startling statement to the House, and when terrified admirals talked of her possessing a "most formidable number" of these ships.* There is certainly nothing in these facts to warrant the suspicion that our neighbours were endeavouring to steal a march on us in the construction of an iron fleet. Three years in the acquisition of only one sea-going iron-cased ship is surely a leisurely rate of progress, with which even our Admiralty might have kept pace.

As there has been a systematic, and to some extent

whom? By those who maintain upwards of 80,000 men in active service, whilst our fleet does not contain more than 35,000—by those who are actually expending, on an average, £12,000,000 sterling annually on their navy; whilst for several years we have been spending, on an average, 125,000,000f., or £5,000,000 sterling."

a successful, effort made by the invasionists to keep alive the panic, by attributing to the French Government secret and extensive preparations of iron-clad vessels, it will be well, before concluding, to add a few words respecting the origin and progress of this innovation in ship-building.

More than fifteen years ago, when the mode of projecting combustible shells horizontally was adopted, it was foreseen that the nature of maritime warfare would be entirely changed. In his evidence before the Ordnance Committee of 1849, Sir Thomas Hastings* said that, in consequence of the adoption of Paixhan's guns, in case of an action between two fleets, "instead of lasting ten hours, its duration will be nearer ten minutes." Here, then, was a clear necessity for some contrivance to meet this new danger; and the objects to be aimed at, in clothing the ships' sides with iron armour, are very clearly defined in the following extract from a Lecture by Mr. Reed, formerly of Her Majesty's Dockyard at Portsmouth, and now editor of the *Mechanics' Magazine*:—

"It is time that all those who concern themselves with this great question of how iron may best be rendered available for the defence of ships' sides, should recur to the circumstance which gave rise to it, and to the true end to be at present attained. That circumstance, undoubtedly, was the introduction of Paixhan's shells into naval warfare; and the end desired is the application of means by which the

* *Minutes*, 5023.

entrance of those terrible missiles through the side of a ship may be avoided. The attainment of this end would leave us subject only to the entrance of solid shot, to which all our ships were exposed during the wars in which we won our supremacy, and from which no practical system of iron-plating can at present be expected to save us. The attempt to build ships which shall be proof to solid shot—at least, to wrought-iron solid shot—is an altogether illusory one; and such ships are not urgently required. It is as a defence against shells, and hollow charged projectiles generally, and against these only, that iron plating can yet be made available. By applying iron of very great thickness, between wind and water, we may reduce the liability to injury by shot at that important part, and it may be well to do this; but if the upper works are made shell-proof, we can expect no more."—p. 21.

The first trial in actual combat of these destructive missiles was at Sinope, November 20th, 1853, when the Turkish squadron was attacked by a Russian fleet, and when "their whole force of fourteen ships was, to a great extent, silenced in a few minutes, and utterly crushed in little more than an hour."* The Russians were well supplied with shell guns, while the Turks had nothing more effective than 24-pounders. During the progress of the Crimean war, an opportunity was afforded to our fleet of experiencing the effects of shells in the attack on the forts of Sebastopol, when some of our vessels were severely

* *Lecture*, by Mr. E. J. Reed, p. 13.

injured; and when the whole affair, which was lost sight of in face of the more absorbing operations on shore, was viewed with even less satisfaction by our navy than by the public. It was during this war, too, that the first trial of iron-clad batteries was witnessed at Kinburn. Our own batteries arrived too late, but those of our allies reached the scene in time to take a part in the siege. And Sir James Elphinstone, a practical authority on naval subjects, said, "When the French batteries, which had fortunately arrived, got an opportunity of acting at Kinburn, they showed that an iron-cased ship was impregnable; yet, after that, we spent three or four years experimenting on iron plates, while we had much better have been employed in building iron ships. We had, perhaps, found out what description of iron would stand hammering the longest, but the great fact of the impregnability of iron ships had been proved at Kinburn."*

The invention of these iron-clad batteries has been attributed to the Emperor of the French. Mr. Scott Russell, however, tells us that the introduction of iron plates originated with Mr. Stevens, the great steam-boat builder, of New York, who was in this country ten years ago, and who then communicated to him the results of some experiments that had been made by the United States' Government with regard to these plates. And Mr. Reed, in his Lecture, quotes an article in the *Mechanics' Magazine*, published in 1824, in which the writer, whilst noticing a memoir

* *Hansard*, clxi. 201.

on this subject by M. de Montgery, a Captain in the French navy, attributes the use of plates of iron or brass, for covering ships and battering rams, to Archimedes, upwards of two thousand years ago.

There is but little merit due, in any quarter, for the adoption of this very obvious and necessary reform in ship-building. Foreign governments might, indeed, very naturally shrink from an innovation which, by substituting iron for wood in the construction of vessels of war, would confer such an immense advantage on England; for whilst in the purchase of timber, and the raw materials of sails and rigging for our navy, we were only on a footing of equality with France, and were placed at a disadvantage as compared with Russia and America,—where those materials were produced,—no sooner does iron take the place of wood, and steam of sails, than the change gives us a natural advantage over the whole world. The British Government did not, however, seem to realize this view; for, instead of proceeding with the construction of iron-cased vessels for resisting combustible shells, for which purpose everybody admitted them to be perfectly successful, successive Boards of Admiralty amused themselves for several years with the comparatively useless experiment of trying to penetrate an iron target a few inches thick with solid shot; and this whilst the engineering and naval authorities were loudly proclaiming that it was for protection against combustion and explosion, rather than penetration, that the iron armour was required.*

* At the late meeting of the Scientific Association, at Manchester, Mr. Scott Russell gave utterance to the opinion of

A volume might be compiled of the letters in the newspapers, the pamphlets, and the speeches, not omitting a series of Lectures by Captain Halsted, which have been published, to stimulate the tardy movements of our Board of Admiralty.

In the meantime, the French Government have, for several years, professed not to lay down a vessel of war, intended for actual combat (as distinguished from *avisos*, transports, etc.), which is not designed to be clad in iron armour.

That portion of the naval expenditure of France, set apart for dockyard wages and materials for ship-building, which was formerly laid out upon wooden vessels, will, therefore, henceforth be devoted to the construction of iron-cased ships; and—it being the practice, as we have already seen, for the Minister of Marine to take a long prospective range in the publication of his plans,—when we are told that fifteen or twenty iron-cased vessels are to be built, it is merely an announcement of what will be the future production of the French dockyards, spread over a series of years. Seeing that this is only a substitution of one class of ships for another, rendered necessary by the progress of science, in what respect can it be said to indicate hostility to us? Our government does not pretend to be in ignorance of the course France is pursuing, or of the motives which decide her policy. We choose to pursue another

nautical men in a brief and pithy sentence: "The whole practical part," he said, "was incorporated in one expression of a great sailor, 'Whatever you do, for God's sake keep out the shells.'"

course. Our Admiralty perseveres in building wooden line-of-battle ships, until compelled to desist by the House of Commons. Then "My Lords" throw all their energies into the construction of wooden vessels of a smaller size, having yet to learn that small wooden ships are as combustible as large ones. And then we are startled with the cry of alarm for the safety of our shores, because the French are said to be building more iron-clad vessels than ourselves! What can our neighbours do to put an end to these periodical scoldings, so trying to their national temper, and so lowering to our own dignity and self-respect? Nobody will expect the Minister of Marine to descend, with his eyes open, to the level of the wasteful mismanagement of our Board of Admiralty. His only hope of peace must, therefore, be in an improvement in our naval administration; and this is the view of the ablest writer in France on the state of the English and French navies, as expressed in the following extract from a private letter, written in consequence of the above incident in the House of Commons:—

"The great cause of the irritation, and of the disagreeable discussions which have taken place on this subject, I don't hesitate to say, is the ignorance, the incapacity, and the absolutely false organization of the Board of Admiralty in England. Whatever increase of power the English may derive from it, I believe, in the end, it would be better for us to see something reasonable established in England, in place of that inactive, blind, wasteful, expensive machine,

which is called the Admiralty, rather than to serve as the scape-goat, as we always do, when they discover that we, not having fallen into all the blunders that have been committed at Somerset House, have obtained results which displease British pride, and which serve as a pretext for railing at our ambition; when, in justice, John Bull ought to blame himself for his own short-comings."

> "Rien n'est plus dangereux qu'un imprudent ami,
> Mieux vaudroit un sage ennemi."

Before the close of the session, two incidents occurred which were calculated to impart renewed life to the panic during the recess. On the 19th July, Mr. Kinglake moved a resolution respecting a rumoured intention of the Piedmontese Government to cede the Island of Sardinia to France. Owing to the known views of the hon. member for Bridgewater, this motion would have excited little interest, had it not derived substance and validity from the speech delivered on the occasion by Lord John Russell, the Foreign Secretary, who, whilst in possession of the disavowals of the governments concerned, contrived to leave the public mind in doubt and uncertainty, by weighing probabilities, speculating on possible dangers, uttering hypothetical threats, and advocating the maintenance of armaments, with a view even to "offensive" operations, in certain undefined contingencies. This speech, which found a subsequent echo out of doors, drew from Sir James Graham, afterwards, the remark that, "Whatever alarm has been created resulted from the speech of

the noble lord the Foreign Secretary, when the question of Sardinia was brought forward."*

On the 26th July, 1861, Lord Clarence Paget, Secretary of the Admiralty, moved for a vote of £250,000, in addition to the ordinary estimate, as the first instalment of an outlay which it was calculated would ultimately amount to £2,500,000, for building iron and iron-cased vessels, and for supplying them with machinery.

This mode of bringing forward unexpected supplementary votes, on the plea that other nations are making sudden additions to their navies, is admirably contrived for keeping alive a sense of uneasiness and panic. The present proceeding could only have been rendered necessary by the useless application of the estimates previously voted for the construction of wooden ships. On the 23rd May, a vote for £949,371 for timber had been carried by the Secretary of the Admiralty, in spite of the strenuous opposition of Mr. Lindsay, who described it as an unprecedented amount, and said that the sum voted the previous year had only been £722,758, and that for a long period of years, prior to 1859, the average amount did not exceed £350,000. This was, perhaps, the most extravagant proposition ever made by the Admiralty; for in the previous year the Secretary had declared that "it was the line-of-battle ships which required the large establishment of timber, for there never was any difficulty in finding timber for frigates, corvettes, and vessels of a smaller class."† The further construction of line-of-battle

* *Hansard*, clxiv. 1636. † *Hansard*, clvii. 2029.

ships was now arrested; the success of the iron ships had been established, and yet more timber than ever was wanted! Had one-half of the amount been applied to iron ship-building, there could have been no pretext for this startling supplementary estimate.

In the course of the exciting discussion which followed, Lord Palmerston said, "We know that France has now *afloat* six iron vessels of various sizes, two of them two-deckers, not frigates, all large vessels." And the Secretary of the Admiralty gave a list of nine iron-cased ships "afloat," including *La Gloire*. There is an inexactness in the word *afloat*, calculated to convey an erroneous impression. Iron ships are not launched with their armour on, but are cased in iron after they are afloat. This is a slow process. The keel of *La Gloire*, for instance, was laid down in June, 1858, she was floated in November, 1859, and made her first trial trip at sea in August, 1860. *She was the only completed sea-going iron-clad vessel at the time when this discussion took place.* To give the name of iron ships to the floating hulls of wooden vessels (sometimes old ones), intended at some future time to be clad in armour, is obviously an inaccuracy of language, calculated to excite groundless suspicion and alarm.

It has already been shown that the French Government had abandoned the construction of wooden ships of war, and that in future all their vessels would be cased in iron. "We know," said Lord Palmerston, "that they have laid down lately the keels, and made preparations to complete, ten other iron vessels of considerable dimensions. The decision as

to these vessels was taken as far back as December last, but was not carried into effect until May, because they were waiting to ascertain what were the qualities and the character of *La Gloire*, and other ships afloat." And, he added, "there is no illusion about them, for we know their names and the ports at which they are being built."* In the course of the debate Lord C. Paget gave a list of these vessels. All this proved the very opposite of concealment or suddenness of determination on the part of the French Government, and that they were pursuing precisely the same course with iron as they had done with wooden ships. It has been seen that in 1857, consequent on the report of the Commission appointed in 1855, the French Government published a programme of their future naval constructions, with the nomenclature of all the vessels in their intended fleet, extending over a period of twelve years. The progress of science had rendered it necessary to substitute iron for wooden ships; and again the plans of the Minister of Marine are fixed for a series of years, and the whole world is acquainted with his plans. The marvel is at the ingenuity with which our statesmen could find anything in these proceedings with which to produce an evening's sensation in the House of Commons.

But the most remarkable incident in this debate remains to be noticed. Mr. Disraeli, on this, as on a former occasion, recommended an arrangement between the English and French Governments, for putting some limit to this naval rivalry, asking,

* *Hansard*, clxiv. 1672, 1673.

"What is the use of diplomacy? What is the use of governments? What is the use of cordial understandings, if such things can take place?"* There is a vacant niche in the Temple of Fame for the ruler or minister who shall be the first to grapple with this monster evil of the day. "Whatsoever nation," says Jeremy Bentham, "should get the start of the other, in making the proposal to reduce and fix the amount of its armed force, would crown itself with everlasting honour."

On the 28th August, 1861, on the occasion of a mediæval holiday ceremonial, the Prime Minister stood on the heights of Dover, surrounded by a force of regular troops, sailors, and volunteers; when, reviving the reminiscences of the projected invasion from the opposite coast, more than half a century ago, he made an eloquent appeal to the volunteers of England to improve and perpetuate their organization. There was no one in the United Kingdom, or in Europe, who, in perusing his speech, doubted the Power to which allusion was made, when he said: "We accept with frankness the right hand of friendship wherever it is tendered to us. We do not distrust that proffered right hand because we see the left hand grasping the hilt of the sword. But when that left hand plainly does so grasp the hilt of the sword, it would be extreme folly in us to throw away our shield of defence."

In the last week of November, 1861, news reached England that Captain Wilks, of the American navy, —falling into the error, not uncommon to men on land

* *Hansard*, cxliv. 1679.

or sea, of constituting himself his own lawyer,—had carried off four American citizens from the deck of a British vessel, in violation of international law. During the period intervening between the arrival of this intelligence and the time when an explanation could be received from the government at Washington, the party who had for years been the promoters of the invasion panics sounded the tocsin of alarm at the prospect of a war with America. The circumstances of the case were certainly not favourable to the alarmists. The people of the United States were plunged in civil war, and the President, beleaguered at Washington, had demanded half a million of men to defend the Union against nearly as large a force of Confederates. The Federal Government had, therefore, every possible motive for wishing to avoid a rupture with England. To meet this objection, the alarmists had recourse to an expedient which had been employed in the case of the French invasion panic. A theory was invented, which the credulous were expected to accept for a fact. Nay, two or three theories were propounded which were in direct contradiction to each other. In the case of France, it was one day the Emperor, whose blind "destiny" was to hurl him on our shores: the next day we were told that his wise and pacific policy would be overruled by the army and the populace.

In the case of America, we were asked, one day, to believe that Mr. Seward (who possesses no more power or responsibility, under the American Constitution, than one of President Lincoln's clerks) had

a long cherished scheme for closing the war with the South, and turning it against Canada: the next day we were informed that the government at Washington was disposed for peace, but that it would be overruled by the "mob."* These assumptions furnished the ground for warlike prognostications, and for appeals to the combative passions of our people throughout the month of December. Meantime, it is more important to consider the course pursued by the British Government.

A dispatch, courteously worded, dated November 30, 1861, was forwarded by the British Cabinet to Washington, expressing the belief that Captain Wilks had acted without the authority of his Government, and requiring the surrender of the captured envoys. It was calculated that an answer to this dispatch could be received in about a month. It arrived, in fact, on the 9th January. It is to this interval of six weeks that the following statement of facts applies. On the 3rd December, three days after the

* The writer, who has twice visited the United States at an interval of twenty-four years, and travelled through nearly the whole of the free States, never saw any mob there, except that which had been imported from Europe. In a few of the large cities, where foreign immigrants are very numerous, they constitute an embarrassment in the working of the municipal governments, owing to their inaptitude for the proper discharge of the duties of free citizens. But this foreign element exercises no sway over the policy of the Federal Government at Washington, or even of the separate State legislatures. The United States, like England, is governed by landowners, with this difference, that they are numbered by thousands in one country, and by millions in the other.

date of the British dispatch, the French Government forwarded a communication, through their minister at Washington, expressing their disapproval of the act of Captain Wilks, accompanied by the courteous intimation that all the neutral powers were interested in the disavowal of the proceeding on the part of the United States' Government. This dispatch was formally communicated to the British Government on the 6th December. On the 19th December, Mr. Adams, the American Minister, waited on our Foreign Minister to say that "no instructions were given to Captain Wilks, to authorise him to act in the manner he had done. Neither had the United States' Government committed itself with regard to any decision upon the character of that act. The Government would wait for any representation the British Government might make before coming to any positive decision." On the 18th December the Austrian, and on the 25th the Prussian Government sent dispatches to Washington, supporting the claim of the British Government. The Russian Ambassador in London wrote to his colleague at Washington, condemning the conduct of Captain Wilks, and this was confirmed by the Russian Government. These proceedings of the three great powers were immediately made known to the British Government.*

This was tantamount to the Arbitrators giving judgment in our favour before they were called on for

* These extracts and dates are taken from the *Parliamentary Paper*, "North America, No. 3, 1862."

their award; and, as it was known to our Cabinet (but concealed from the public), that the President's Government had not authorised the act of Captain Wilks, the chances of war were removed almost beyond the bounds of possibility. There was thus every motive for awaiting in calm confidence the reply from Washington. It was but a question of a month or six weeks. Even if the Congress of the United States, which alone can declare war, had, without debate, thrown down the gauntlet to Europe, a campaign in the depth of winter is as impracticable on the frontiers of Canada as in the Gulf of Finland. So long as peace continued, a Convention remained in force between the two countries which prevented any addition being made to the armaments on the Lakes which separate the United States from Canada, until after six months' notice; and the highest military authority* has declared that the fate of a war in that region will depend on the superiority upon the Lakes.

All this, however, did not prevent our Government from employing the interval between the 30th November and the 9th January in hurrying forward preparations for war, as though an immediate rupture were all but inevitable. The country was startled by the instant appearance of a proclamation, prohibiting the exportation of the munitions of war. Expedition after expedition was dispatched across the Atlantic. In three weeks, as we were afterwards informed by the Secretary of the Admiralty, from 10,000 to

* The Duke of Wellington.

11,000 troops were on their way to America, and our naval force on that station was nearly doubled.

These proceedings were trumpeted to the world, amid cries of exultation, by the organs of the invasion party, not one of whom seemed to occupy himself for a moment with the reflection that we were exposing our flank to an attack from that formidable neighbour against whose menacing attitude, even whilst extending the right hand of friendship, we had been so eloquently warned from the heights of Dover. This is the more remarkable, when we recollect that the Report of the Commission on Fortifications had completely laid bare all our weak places, and had drawn from Sir Charles Napier a cry of alarm: —"And what," he exclaimed, "were we to do while these fortifications were building? Would the French wait three years before they went to war, while we built our fortifications? * * * * The Commissioners ought to be brought to trial for high treason, seeing that they pointed out to the Emperor of the French all the possible places at which he might land an army."*

The difficulty in which we found ourselves, when under the sudden necessity of providing warm clothing for our troops, brought the disposition of the French Emperor to a singular test. Such is the severity of the winter in Canada, that sentries are often obliged to be relieved every half hour to avoid being frozen, and there is frequently a fall of seven feet of snow during the season. For such a rigorous

* *Hansard*, clx. 545-6.

climate, a corresponding equipment of clothing was indispensable. Among other articles of necessity were long boots, in which we found ourselves deficient. The following little incident must be given in the words of Sir G. C. Lewis, the Secretary for War, delivered in the House of Commons, on the 17th February, 1862, and, as it is taken from the newspaper report of the speech, the expressions of feeling, as they were elicited from the House, are also retained:—

"There was one article that was not used by any of our regiments, and which was not in store in this country,—the article of long boots. The French Government, having been informed of our difficulty, undertook the supply of 1,500 pairs of boots, which came over in forty-eight hours from Paris (cheers), and at a cost for which they could scarcely have been obtained from our contractors. (Hear, hear.) I am happy to mention this as a proof of the friendly action of the French Government (hear, hear)."

And thus ends the third panic!

It has been demonstrated in the preceding pages, by evidence drawn from our own official statements, totally irrespective of the French accounts, that, as a nation, we have borne false witness against our neighbours: that, without a shadow of proof or justification, we have accused them, repeatedly, during a long series of years, of meditating an unprovoked attack on our shores, in violation of every principle of international law, and in contempt of all the obligations of morality and honour.

This accusation involves an impeachment of the intelligence, as well as the honour of France. In attributing to the government of that country the design of entering into a naval war with England, and especially in a clandestine or secret manner, we have placed them on a par, for intelligence, almost, with children. There is not a statesman in France who does not know, and admit, that to provoke a contest with England, single-handed, for the supremacy of the seas, would be to embark in a hopeless struggle; and this not so much owing to our superiority in government arsenals,—where notorious mismanagement countervails our advantages,—as to the vast and unrivalled resources we possess in private establishments for the construction of ships and steam-machinery.

In inquiring into the origin of these panics, it would be folly to conceal from ourselves that they have been sometimes promoted by those who have not themselves shared in the delusion. Personal rancour, professional objects, dynastic aims, the interests of party, and other motives, may have played their part. But successive governments have rendered themselves wholly responsible for the invasion panics, by making them the plea for repeated augmentations of our armaments. It is this which has impressed the public mind with a sense of danger, and which has drawn the youth of the middle class from civil pursuits, to enrol themselves for military exercises—a movement not the less patriotic because it originated in groundless apprehensions.

If the people of this country would offer a prac-

tical atonement to France, and at the same time secure for themselves an honourable relief from the unnecessary burdens which their governments have imposed on them, they should initiate a frank proposal for opening negociations between the two governments, with the view of agreeing to some plan for limiting their naval armaments. This would, undoubtedly, be as acceptable to our neighbours as it would be beneficial to ourselves. It would tend to bring the attitude of the French Government into greater harmony with its new commercial policy, and thus save it from a repetition of those taunts with which it was, with some logical force, assailed, a few weeks ago, by M. Pouyer-Quertier, the leader of the Protectionists in the *Corps Legislatif*:—

"If, indeed," said he, "in exchange for the benefits you have conceded to England, you had only established a firmer and more faithful alliance! Had you been only able to effect a saving in your military and naval expenditure! But see what is passing in England, where they are pushing forward, without measure, their armaments. * * * * Can we be said to be at peace while our coasts are surrounded with British gun-boats, and with iron-cased vessels? Are these the fruits of the alliance—these the results of that *entente cordiale* on which you calculated as the price of your concessions? Let the free-trade champions answer me. The Treaty has not only inflicted on us commercial losses, but its effects are felt in our budget as a financial disaster. The measures of the English Government compel you to

increase your armaments, and thus deprive us of all hope of retrenchment."

It must be remembered that such is the immense superiority of our navy at the present time—so greatly does it surpass that relative strength which it was formerly accustomed to bear in comparison with the navy of France—that it devolves on us, as a point of honour, to make the first proposal for an attempt to put a limit to this most irrational and costly rivalry of armaments.

Should such a step lead to a successful result, we must not be surprised if the parties who have been so long employed in promoting jealousy and discord between this country and France, should seek for congenial occupation in envenoming our relations with America, or elsewhere. There is but one way of successfully dealing with these alarmists. Speaking in 1850, at the close of his career, the most cautious and sagacious of our statesmen said "I believe that, in time of peace, we must, by our retrenchment, *consent to incur some risk.** I venture to say that, if you choose to have all the garrisons of all your colonial possessions in a complete state, and to have all your fortifications secure against attack, no amount of annual expenditure will be sufficient to accomplish your object."

If, hereafter, an attempt be made, on no better evidence than that which has been subjected to analysis in the preceding pages, to induce us to arm and fortify ourselves against some other power, it is

* *Hansard*, cix. 766.

hoped that, remembering the enormous expense we have incurred to insure ourselves against imaginary dangers from France, we shall meet all such attempts to frighten us with the words of Sir Robert Peel, "We consent to incur some risk."

NOTE.—We may, perhaps, be permitted to add a few words of explanation, of a personal nature. The writer took a part, both in the House and out of doors, in opposition to the first two panics, and to the expenditure to which it was attempted to make them subservient. At the dissolution, in the spring of 1857, consequent on the vote of the House against the China war, he was not returned to Parliament; but was elected for Rochdale during his absence in America, and took his seat on his return home, in June, 1859. In the following autumn he went to France, and remained there, and in Algiers, till May, 1861. The only occasion on which he spoke in the House, during the interval between the spring of 1857 and that of 1861, was in opposition to Mr. Horsman's fortification motion, on the 31st July, 1859; when he gave expression, at some length, to many of the views contained in this pamphlet, and when he analysed the contents of the *Parliamentary Paper*, No. 182, 1859, to which reference has been so frequently made.

APPENDIX.

SINCE the preceding pages were written, the news of the single combat between the two American iron-clad vessels, the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*, has reached this country, and has been followed by something like an attempt to create an *American* invasion panic. Again the cry has arisen, from the old quarters, for precipitate preparations; and again, as in the case of France, there is a disposition to forget all that we have already done. The United States' Government, being actually at war, have, we are told, determined to spend fifteen million dollars on armour-cased vessels. England, being at peace, has already incurred, or committed herself to, a much larger expenditure for the same purpose. As nearly the whole of the projected outlay in America is for gun-boats, or coast batteries, and not for vessels adapted for crossing the Atlantic, there is nothing in these preparations that is menacing to Europe; and we may, therefore, wait in safety whilst the Americans are subjecting to the test of actual warfare the rival powers of artillery and iron shields. Under the intense stimulus now imparted to the mechanical genius of that inventive people, every month will probably witness the production of some new contrivance for aggression or defence; and should the

civil war unhappily continue, it may, not improbably, lead to discoveries which will supersede existing armaments altogether.

Meantime, the experience which we have already gained from this deplorable contest has proved that our existing wooden fleet is worse than useless,—that it is absolutely dangerous. When, in the pursuits of private industry, a manufacturing capitalist discovers that his machinery has been superseded by new inventions, and that he can only continue to work it at a serious loss, he does not hesitate at once to throw it aside, however cautious he may be in making choice of a new investment to replace it. Precisely the same principle is applicable to nations.

The following Memorandum, which was forwarded to the Prime Minister in October last,* will probably be thought, in some quarters, to have acquired increased force from the late American news.

MEMORANDUM.

"The present peculiar and exceptional state of the English and French navies, the result of scientific progress in maritime armaments, offers an opportunity for a reciprocal arrangement between the two governments, of the highest interest to both countries.

"During the last century, and down almost to the present day, the relative naval strength of the two countries has been measured by the number of their line-of-battle ships. But, owing to the recent improvements in explosive shells, and other combustible missiles, and in the modes of projecting them,

[* This was written early in 1862.]

these large vessels have been pronounced, by competent judges, no longer suited for maritime warfare; and warning voices have even proclaimed that they will henceforth prove only a snare to those who employ them.

"This opinion has found utterance in several emphatic phrases.

"'Wooden ships of the line,' says one, 'will, in a future naval war, be nothing but human slaughter-houses.' 'They will be blown to lucifer matches,' says another. A third authority tells us that, in case of a collision between two such vessels at close quarters, the only words of command for which there will be time will be, 'Fire, and lower your boats!' Whilst a fourth declares that 'any government that should send such a vessel into action against an iron-plated ship would deserve to be impeached.'

"It hardly required such a weight of evidence to convince us that to crowd nearly a thousand men upon a huge wooden target, with thirty or forty tons of gunpowder at their feet, and expose them to a bombardment with detonating shells and other combustible projectiles, must be a very suicidal proceeding.

"The governments of the great maritime states have shown that they share this opinion, by abandoning the construction of line-of-battle ships.

"America, several years since, gave the preference to long low vessels, possessing the utmost possible speed, and being capable of carrying the largest guns.

"France was the next to cease building ships of the line.

"The British Government have come to the same decision; and they gave a pledge last session, with the approval of Parliament, that they would not complete the vessels of this class which were unfinished on the stocks.

"It is under these circumstances that the two countries find themselves in possession of about one hundred wooden ships of the line with screw propellers. England has between sixty and seventy, and France between thirty and forty of these vessels, the greater part of them in commission; and their maintenance constitutes one of the principal items in the naval expenditure of the two countries.

"It will be admitted that if these vessels did not exist they would not now be constructed, and that when worn out they will not be renewed. It is equally indisputable that they have been built by the two governments with a view to preserve a certain relative force towards each other.

"In proof that this rivalry has been confined exclusively to England and France, it may be stated, on the authority of the official representative of the Admiralty in the House of Commons, that Spain has only three, Russia nine, and Italy one, of this class of ships. America has only one.

"These circumstances suggest, as an obvious course, to the two governments, that they should endeavour to come to an amicable agreement by which the greater portion of these ships might be withdrawn, and so disposed of as to be rendered incapable of

being again employed for warlike purposes. This might be effected by an arrangement which should preserve to each country precisely the same relative force after the reduction as before. For instance, assuming, merely for the sake of argument, England to possess sixty-five, and France thirty-five, then for every seven withdrawn by France, England should withdraw thirteen; and thus, to whatever extent the reduction was carried, provided this proportion were preserved, the two countries would still possess the same relative force. The first point on which an understanding should be come to is as to the number of ships of the line actually possessed by each—a very simple question, inasmuch as it is not complicated by the comparison of vessels in different stages of construction. Then, the other main point is to agree upon a plan for making a fair selection, ship for ship, so that the withdrawals on both sides may be as nearly as possible of corresponding size or value. If the principle of a proportionate reduction be agreed to, far fewer difficulties will be found in carrying out the details than must have been encountered in arranging the plans of co-operation in the Crimean and Chinese wars, or in settling the details of the Commercial Treaty.

"And is this principle of reciprocity, in adjusting the naval forces of the two countries, an innovation? On the contrary, it would be easy to cite the declarations of the leading statesmen on both sides of the Channel, during the last twenty years, to prove that they have always been in the habit of regulating the amount of their navies by a reference to each other's

armaments. True, this has been invariably done to justify an increase of expenditure. But why should not the same principle be also available in the interest of economy, and for the benefit of the taxpayers? A nation suffers no greater loss of dignity from surrendering its independence of action in regulating its armaments, whether the object be to meet a diminution or an increase of its neighbours' forces.

"Although this reduction of the obsolete ships of the line presents a case of the easiest solution; and should, therefore, in the first place, be treated as a separate measure; it could hardly fail to pave the way for an amicable arrangement for putting some limit to those new armaments which are springing out of the present transition state of the two navies.

"The application of iron plates to ship-building, which has rendered the reconstruction of the navies necessary, must be regarded as the commencement of an indefinite series of changes; and, looking to the great variety of experiments now making, both in ships and artillery, and to the new projects which inventors are almost daily forcing upon the attention of the governments, it is not improbable that, a few years hence, when England and France shall have renewed their naval armaments, they will again be rendered obsolete by new scientific discoveries.

"In the mean time, neither country adds to its relative strength by this waste of national wealth; for, as both governments aim at only a proportionate increase, it is not contemplated that either should derive exclusive advantage from the augmentation. An escape from this dilemma is not to be sought in

the attempt to arrest the march of improvement, or to discourage the efforts of inventive genius: a remedy for the evil can only be found in a more frank understanding between the two governments. If they will discard the old and utterly futile theory of secrecy,—a theory on which an individual manufacturer or merchant no longer founds his hopes of successful competition with a foreign rival,—they may be enabled, by the timely exchange of explanations and assurances, to prevent what ought to be restricted to mere experimental trials from growing into formidable preparations for war. If those who are responsible for the naval administration of the two countries were consulted, it would probably be found that they are appalled at the prospect of a rivalry which, whilst it can satisfy neither the reason nor the ambition of either party, offers a boundless field of expenditure to both.

"Nor should it be forgotten that the financial pressure caused by these rival armaments is a source of constant irritation to the populations of the two countries. The British taxpayers believe, on the authority of their leading statesmen, that the increased burden to which they are subjected is caused by the armaments on the other side of the Channel. The people of France are also taught to feel similarly aggrieved towards England. The feelings of mutual animosity produced by this sacrifice of substantial interests are not to be allayed by the exchange of occasional acts of friendship between the two *governments*. On the contrary, this inconsistent policy, in incessantly arming against each other at home,

whilst uniting for common objects abroad, if it do not impair public confidence in their sincerity, tends at least to destroy all faith in an identity of interests between the rulers and the ruled, by showing how little advantage the peoples derive from the friendship of their governments.

"But the greatest evil connected with these rival armaments is that they destroy the strongest motives for peace. When two great neighbouring nations find themselves permanently subjected to a war expenditure, without the compensation of its usual excitements and honours, the danger to be apprehended is that, if an accident should occur to inflame their hostile passions—and we know how certain these accidents are at intervals to arise—their latent sense of suffering and injury may reconcile them to a rupture, as the only eventual escape from an otherwise perpetual war taxation in a time of peace.

"Circumstances appeal strongly to the two governments at the present juncture, in favour of a measure of wise and safe economy. In consequence of the deplorable events in America, and the partial failure of the harvests of Europe, the commerce and manufactures of both countries are exposed to an ordeal of great suffering. Were the proposed naval reduction carried into effect, it would ameliorate the financial position of the governments, and afford the means for alleviating the fiscal burdens of the peoples. But the moral effect of such a measure would be still more important. It should be remembered that, although these large vessels have lost their value in the eyes of professional men, they preserve their

traditional terrors for the world at large; and when they move about, in fleets, on neighbouring coasts, they excite apprehension in the public mind, and even check the spirit of commercial enterprise. Were such an amicable arrangement as has been suggested accomplished, it would be everywhere accepted as a pledge of peace; and, by inspiring confidence in the future, would help to reanimate the hopes of the great centres of trade and industry, not only in France and England, but throughout Europe.

"Will not the two governments, then, embrace this opportunity of giving effect to a policy which, whilst involving no risk, no sacrifice of honour, or diminution of relative power, will tend to promote the present prosperity and future harmony of the two countries, and thus offer an example of wisdom and moderation worthy of this civilised age, and honourable to the fame of the two foremost nations of the earth?"

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THE END.

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